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v. 1

and Liberty, and introduced him to an extensive acquaintance with the Members of the two Houſes of Parliament; but he accounted it his greateſt honour to be the inſtrument of doing good to the ſouls of thoſe who attended his miniſtry.

In theſe, as well as in his other printed Diſcourſes, the reader will obſerve his almoſt inimitable ſkill of accommodating the word of God to the various occurrences of providence as they turned up in his life; ſo that the character of *Apollos* may with great propriety be aſcribed to him, *Acts* xviii. 24. "He was an eloquent man, "and mighty in the ſcriptures."

But after all that can be ſaid of him, his large underſtanding in ſpiritual things, his ſprightly genius, his unſhaken zeal, his comprehenſive thought, his flowing periods, his faith and charity, his godlineſs and honeſty appear in his Sermons to have ſuch a ſufficiency in them, that they need no recommendation.

August 25, 1762. *RICHARD WINTER.*

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ERRATA.

Page 57, line 26, dele *of*
—— 61, line 12, add *does.*
—— 70, line 18, read *Armada.*
—— 87, for *dath* read *hath,* in the text.
—— 138, laſt line but one, read *about.*
—— 155, line 24, for *Price* read *Prince.*
—— 246, line 13, for *Darious* read *Darius.*
—— 296, line 25, for *impoſture* read *impoſtor.*
—— 320, line 26, dele *it.*
—— 351, line 22, for *and* read *an.*
—— 364, line 12, for *Egupt* read *Egypt.*
—— 413, laſt line but one, for *perſecution* read *perſuaſion.*

Note, The three Sermons Preached *November* 5, 1705, *June* 27, 1706, *November* 5, 1706, at the End of the SECOND VOLUME, the Reader is deſired to read in their order after Sermon VI. in the FIRST VOLUME, they not being procured ſoon enough to be inſerted in their proper Place.

SERMON

SERMON I.

TO THE

READER.

THESE Sermons come abroad into the world with the same design that raised them to the pulpit; and that is to promote a religious memory of that *deliverance*, which put a new credit upon the fifth of *November*. The happy change which commenced in *England*, 1688, deserves to be saved from death, and calls for a zeal of all degrees, when so many hands are at work to give it the fatal blow. I have here endeavoured to propound those doctrines which are the christian's support in every terror of life; and more especially in those extensive dangers which include the whole Church at once: God's securing presence with his people (*a*); his indulgent sway over them (*b*); his readiness to appear for them in the darkest extremity (*c*); the vast compass that a national mercy takes (*d*); and the divine inscriptions that are upon it (*e*): these are matters of healing reflection in a day of calamity.

(*a*) Serm. I. (*b*) Serm. II. (*c*) Serm. III. (*d*) Serm. IV. (*e*) Serm. VI.

I cannot think that diſcourſes upon theſe ſubjects are born out of due time in this juncture, nor am I capable of ſo much complaiſance to the opinion in vogue, as to ſuppoſe that now there can be *no rational ground to fear any miſchief from Popery* *. The Scripture has made it no good ſymptom, when men cry out *peace and ſafety:* the iſſue is ſo far from being parallel to their vanity, that it is no other than *ſudden deſtruction* that *comes upon them* (*g*). That *city* had the marks of ruin in her forehead, which promiſed herſelf an ample ſecurity; GOD took ſuch language ſo ill, that he meaſures his anger to them by the exceſs of their fooliſh hopes. *How much ſhe hath glorified herſelf, and lived deliciouſly, ſo much torment and ſorrow doth he give her: for ſhe hath ſaid in her heart, I ſit a queen, and am no widow, and ſhall ſee no ſorrow, therefore ſhall her plagues come in one day* (*h*). The Church made it one ſtrain of her *lamentation*, that ſuch as ought to have given her fair warning in blowing the trumpet, endeavoured rather to help on a dreaming preſumption: it is mentioned as a brand upon their treachery, *Thy prophets have ſeen vain and fooliſh things for thee, and they have not diſcovered thine iniquity, to turn away thy captivity; but have ſeen for thee falſe burdens, and cauſes of baniſhment* (*i*); though their caſe was as probably ſafe, and had as few preſages of ruin as any, for *the kings of the earth, and all the inhabitants of the world, would not have believed, that the adverſary and the enemy would have entred into the gates of Jeruſalem* (*k*).

There is a great deal of pains taken to perſuade us, that any farther methods *to prevent the growth of Popery* are needleſs, though the reaſons look very tranſparent in ſome peoples eyes; they are ſuch as a common

* See Doctor *Binckes*'s Sermon before the Houſe of Commons *Nov.* 5. And the ingenious anſwer to it in an *Expoſtulatory Letter*.

(*g*) 1 Theſſ. v. 3.
(*h*) Rev. xviii. 7, 8.
(*i*) Lam. ii. 14.
(*k*) Lam. iv. 12.

mon ſight may diſcover a long train of dangers through. Is it not time to think that there is a plunder deſigned for the bleſſings, which made their entrance with the *Revolution*, when the *great Prince*, who was then our *guardian angel*, meets with ſo laviſh a raillery? This is a proof equally convictive and wounding, that the impreſſion of our happy eſcape is gone. It looks like wheeling about to bondage again, when people are making a new courtſhip to the plagues of *Egypt*, and extolling *Pharaoh*, the very worſt of them all. To make their deſign more ſupple and taking, their firſt work is to ſting the reputation of *his late Majeſty*; that a malicious character of his perſon may ſink a taint into the cauſe he came about.

No ſooner had he taken his *ſerene farewel*, and ſhifted from one throne to another, but the brute was unchained: the malice that uſed to ſleep in cowardiſe or maſk in compliment, then began a ſincere outrage. Though few had courage enough to affront his life, yet there was no danger in fighting his duſt. His very name had often (like a powerful dart of lightning) melted an enemy in the ſcabbard; but when this light was extinguiſhed, then they came out of their dens, like creatures whetted for prey; and never till then could they pretend to be his match. When he could no longer ſhew *his* face, they ventured to ſhew *theirs*. Thus it was with *Iſrael*, they begin to murmur juſt when *Moſes* was taken up *into the mount*. The prejudice that went no farther than an inward fret, or ſome repining whiſpers, broke looſe when the check of ſuch a ruler's preſence was gone: and their rage was ſo little frugal, that they include both GOD and his ſervant in one abuſe; idolatry in worſhip and ingratitude in politics mingle in the ſame reflection: they ſtrike both at their GOD and their captain, in this ſentence, *Up, let us make us gods, which may go before us; for as for this Moſes, the man*

that brought us up out of Egypt, we know not what is become of him (*l*). The ſame ſpirit in *ſuch a generation* begun its clamour, as ſoon as our deliverer was gone to *ſee God face to face.*

So heady was this malice, that they charge him at random with a crime of the deepeſt malignity: they impute to him a deſign of diſturbing the line of ſucceſſion, breaking one great link in the chain, raſing out her *preſent Majeſty*'s title, and advancing the houſe of *Hanover* to a more immediate claim. They had given the ſtory its complete ſhape, and it was ſpirited with ſuch a confidence, that ſome people thought it both their duty and intereſt to believe it: and indeed a faith thus expoſed to ſale is no rarity. But the *Houſe of Lords*, in a noble diſdain of this rumour, gave it a fair ſcrutiny, and then left a brand upon it in this *reſolve*:

" The Houſe being informed that there has been a " report ſpread abroad, that amongſt the late King's " papers, ſome papers had been found, tending to " the prejudice of her preſent Majeſty, or her ſuc- " ceſſion to the crown, and the Lord Preſident, the " Lord Steward, the Lord Chamberlain, the Earl " of *Marlborough*, and the Earl of *Albemarle*, who " were the perſons appointed by her Majeſty to in- " ſpect the ſaid papers, having, at the deſire of the " Houſe, ſeverally declared, That amongſt the late " King's papers they did not ſee or find any paper " in the leaſt tending to the prejudice of her Majeſty, " or her ſucceſſion to the crown, or to her prejudice " in any reſpect whatſoever, or which might give any " ground or colour for ſuch report: it is thereupon " reſolved by the Lords ſpiritual and temporal in " Parliament aſſembled, That the ſaid report is " groundleſs, falſe, villainous and ſcandalous, to " the diſhonour of the late King's memory, and " *highly tending to the diſſervice of her preſent Majeſty.*

" It

(*l*) Exodus xxxii. 1.

" It is ordered by the Lords ſpiritual and temporal " in Parliament aſſembled, That the matter of fact " aforeſaid, and the reſolution of this Houſe there- " upon, be laid before her Majeſty by his Grace the " Duke of *Bolton*, the Earl Marſhal, the Earl of " *Radnor*, the Earl of *Stamford*, the Earl of *Scarbo-* " *rough*, and the Lord *Ferrers*; and that they do " humbly deſire her Majeſty from this Houſe, That " her Majeſty will give order to Mr Attorney General " to proſecute, with the utmoſt ſeverity of law, the " authors or publiſhers of the abovementioned, or " ſuch like ſcandalous reflections."

When this collection of lies was routed, then the noiſe run upon *exorbitant grants:* the Prince who ſaved the nation's treaſure from enemies, was accuſed of draining it by *penſions*. But *the ſame honourable Houſe* have again defended the IMMORTAL NAME from this aſperſion, by telling her Majeſty in their late addreſs, [*Feb.* 5.] " That it appears by the " navy-books in the year 1697, (the laſt year of the " laſt war) the penſions only amounted to Seven " thouſand ſeventy-ſeven pounds; ſince which time " they are ſo far increaſed, that the eſtimate of the " penſions for the year 1705 amount to Eighteen " thouſand one hundred and eleven Pounds."

Now the moſt faſhionable topic of accuſation is, that he deſigned to dig up the foundations of the Church; but the argument they bring for it ruins the cauſe which it pretends to aſſiſt, and inſtead of wounding his character, leaves a glory upon it. The crime that is mentioned with ſo much noiſe, is his even tender carriage to all Proteſtants, by which he anſwered that great title of being *a common father to all his people.* This did not only ſecure us of an endearment abroad, but it abated that which has always been the moſt fatal diſtemper of this nation; I mean, a ſpirit of animoſity which conſumes us within, preys upon the vitals of the kingdom, and thus makes us

the eaſier conqueſt to a foreign enemy. What better zeal could he ſhew to the Church, than by advancing men of ſo much learning, holineſs and moderation, as have endeavoured to cool the fury on both ſides? By their example and conduct we are learning to fill up that diſtance with love, which has been made by varieties in opinion. Men of ſuch qualifications will always be attractive of praiſe, from thoſe that long to ſee the things of peace purſued: and their methods are more likely to proſper an argument, than any diſmal ſchemes of cruelty. Perſecution carries a conviction no farther than its penalty; it only deals with the part that is vulnerable: the mind all this while is untouched, and is ſo far from being a captive, that it rather ſours into more ſuſpicion of the cauſe that is thus promoted. Fire and faggot are no proper illuminations for the judgment. The moſt obtaining character that *Satan* goes under, is that of a *Deſtroyer*; and certainly when our *meaſures* are like to him, the *cauſe* can bear but little reſemblance of Chriſt. Paſſion and ruin have no place in the artillery of the Temple, but muſt always go for unhallowed things, the rages of corruption and darkneſs.

The *Houſe of Lords* (in the laſt year's conference) gave a noble teſtimony againſt any ſeverities to Conſcience, and have fixed King WILLIAM's character in their argument. "When by ſuch (*oppreſſing*) me-
"thods (ſay they) we were reduced to the laſt extre-
"mity, then was the late King *invited over* to come
"and deliver us; and after he had ſecured our Reli-
"gion, our Laws, and our Liberties, he, by the
"*Act of Toleration* which he paſſed, quieted thoſe
"heats that had almoſt conſumed us: whatever ſome
"may think, he will ſtill be reckoned amongſt the
"greateſt of our Kings; to him we owed a long con-
"tinuance of a flouriſhing time, even during a great
"war, and it is to him that we owe the great hap-
"pineſs of her Majeſty's being now on the throne.

"The

" The Church has no reaſon to complain of the ef-
" fects of the Toleration, for as the numbers of thoſe
" who divide from us do viſibly abate all over the
" nation, ſo the heat and fermentation which was
" raiſed by thoſe diviſions is almoſt intirely laid, and
" we cannot but look on that as an happy ſtep to-
" wards the healing of our wounds." The neceſſity and charm of an healing ſpirit is both recommended and exemplified in my Lord Biſhop of *Sarum*'s Charge and Sermon at his late triennial viſitation.

But it is this temper which makes them obnoxious to ſo much indecency. Some people have been waiting for a time, when the Diſſenters ſhould once again be their game, *purſued as roes upon the mountains*. The main buſtle of their Religion (pardon the harſhneſs of the name) is to *call down fire from heaven* upon thoſe that differ from them; though they miſtake their place, for none of the fire which they love is to be found *there:* but ſo eager are they in their chaſe, that they cannot endure any tenderneſs in *quality* ſhould ſkreen the prey. This makes them put all upon a level in character, both the men they would deſtroy, and thoſe that reſiſt their fury. *Diſſenters* and *Low-Church*, *Separation* and *Moderation*, are things of equal repute; they are both damned with the ſame impatience.

This is a thing ſo notorious, that it is above the need of particular inſtances; I ſhall only mention one which is very remarkable in its kind, being firſt delivered in *Parliament* (where the nation is epitomized) and afterwards *printed* for a more general peruſal, ſo that now it is addreſſed to the larger volume of the *Commons of England*. I have thrown the quotation into the margin, as a paſſage that ought to ſtand by itſelf *. There is another paſſage in that ſpeech which

* I did wonder to hear ſo many Biſhops againſt the Bill; but that wonder ceaſed, when I conſidered whom they owed their preferment

which throws a reflection upon his late Majesty, though the accusation is so happily founded, that most people in the nation are able to judge whether it is true or no. I will give you it in the margin, and leave it to such a reputation as every Reader's justice directs him to put upon it *. One would think these could never be the men, who used to preach up an unlimited subjection to *Bishops* and *Judges:* the mystery of that doctrine is now unravelled. They do not exceed their neighbours in any true value for the office, but they design to serve a narrow interest by the man that fills it: for when they are baffled in this, both the *chair* and the *bench* are the common-shore of reproaches: witness that saucy impudent reflection upon *one*, who has been the *glory of his great station*, a steddy example of conscience, and sacred regard to the law. I must once more dismiss the reader to the margin, for I would do by such quotations as the *Israelites* did by their *uncleanness*, remove it to a *separate place*, that it might not annoy the *camp:* though when you have read the charge, you will find it so deeply loaden that it must burst. The story is as much a lie, as the remark that hangs upon it is unmannerly †.

Some

ferment to. The Archbishop of *Canterbury*, I think, was promoted to that See by my Lord *S—d*'s interest; and being asked what reasons he had against the Bill, replied, He had not well considered the Bill, but that my Lord *Somers* told him it ought not to pass. This was a very weighty reason for the head of our Church to give; and yet, I dare say, none of the rest of them could give a better. One would be provoked by the late behaviour of the Bishops, to move for leave to bring in a Bill for the toleration of Episcopacy; for since they are of the *same principles* with the Dissenters, it is but just, I think, that they should stand upon the *same foot*.

* They may remember, if they please to recollect, the language in the late reign, *Sir, You must turn this Gentleman out, or else I cannot serve you.* And if any Gentleman was in the interest of the Church of *England*, it was a sufficient exception against his being imployed. No Gentleman of that principle was then fit to be a *Deputy-Lieutenant*, or a *Justice of Peace*.

† So tender are they of their Dissenting Brethren, that I am told it has lately been delivered as Law, by a *great man* in *Westminster-Hall*,

Some that pretend a mighty deference for this government have disputed the foundation of the last, and tell us our *great Deliverer* should not have been *King*, but *Regent*; that a door might be left open for the *man*, the *superstition* and *tyranny*, which were all sent together to the nation from whence we got them: but as that change was the result of close and free deliberation, so it has been honourably asserted in the abovementioned *conference*; for it is there affirmed, "That the Lords do not well understand the inference, "that as upon the revolution the last reign begun with "an Act in favour of the Dissenters; so the Commons "do desire in the beginning of her Majesty's reign, "an Act may pass in favour of the Church. The "Lords conceive that *both reigns began upon the same* "*bottom and foundation*; and that as in this reign her "Majesty has been pleased to give gracious assurances "as to liberty of conscience, so in the last, the Church "ever met with protection and support."

But I am really surprised at that length I have run; so many quotations flowing into this preface, have swelled it beyond my first design: though they are all of them passages which I read with so much gust, that I cannot think they will be unentertaining.

As to the following Sermons, they are not squeezed from me by an invincible importunity; I have not that hackney shelter to run to. If a voluntary design of recommending the Revolution to a *serious value* be not excuse enough, I confess, I am unprotected. This you will find to be their main drift, especially in the three last.

I am far from thinking that the end of this deliverance is attained by a zeal for the *glorious memory* of

Hall, that a notorious perjured vagabond, with two wives at once, being possest of a separate Congregation, though without any license or legal qualification to preach to them, shall for that reason only be exempt from the late Act for listing vagrants.

Preface to *Moderation Displayed.*

of King WILLIAM (though that is a debt from every *Engliſhman* and *Proteſtant*) but we are to conſider an *infinite Agent* in the whole, and learn to be more active in his honour, more depending upon his goodneſs. Let us not ſin away the liberty and peace which have ſometimes been recovered with blood, but in our *Revolution* came ſo cheap and quick, as if GOD would have little elſe but himſelf ſeen in it. Heaven has now made us the Defence of *Europe*, the Guardians of a crumbling *Empire:* let us not diſarm ourſelves, and grieve away that divine preſence and bleſſing, which is *the glory of any people.*

GOD has done wonderful things for us the laſt year. He ſhews a willingneſs to be our guardian; but let us not lay an abuſive ſtreſs upon his forbearance. All theſe liberalities of Providence are not to heighten our rebellion againſt him, or give us any licenſe for ſenſuality and hatred. If we ſtill abound in luxury and envy, deſtroying ourſelves and one another, that is acting the *brute* and the *Devil* in the face of an eternal friend.

This being the day of *his late Majeſty's quiet departure* to an immortal crown, we may give ourſelves the liberty of a ſerious pauſe, and ſay, *Hitherto has the Lord helped us.* Let us bleſs the divine goodneſs which continued his life without any ſcandal, and quenched it without any horror; prepared him both to rule and to die; made him glorious in poſſeſſing, and eaſy in leaving a toilſome government, and ſo largely fitted *our preſent gracious Queen* to ſucceed him. Our value for his memory is ſo far from being a weakning of duty and veneration for *her*, that we think the one is eſſential to the other. A *malignant* in the late reign muſt either be a *Nonjuror* or *Malecontent* in this.

I will conclude with an hearty wiſh, that the victories of the laſt year may be drowned in the greater ſucceſſes of this; that *Blenheim* and *Hockſtet*, which make ſo brave a ſound in hiſtory now, may be remembred

membred as introductions to ſome more extended conqueſt. May this be the character of *our wonderful General*, that as the common enemy has *begun to fall before him*, ſo he may go on ſinking, until he comes to a miſery as deep as his wickedneſs.

May her excellent Majeſty, the great moving *ſoul of the alliance*, find the benefit of that pious reſolution of calling in help from above. As ſhe has graciouſly appointed *April* 4, for a *public faſt*, to invite GOD into the confederacy; ſo may ſhe find that his power will neither be an enemy nor a neuter, but be employed in cauſing *the people to fall under her*.

And may we in *the next Parliament* have men whoſe hearts are gathered up into the common welfare, who make *the liberties of the people* their darling and charge. Then may we hope that *Judgment will run down our ſtreets as a river, and Righteouſneſs as a mighty ſtream:* the crown will ſit more eaſy upon the royal head; ruling will not be ſo thorny and oppreſſive a work as it has been. Such an union would terrify the enemy, and cruſh *his only hopes* of ſucceeding. That GOD may pour down *ſuch a ſpirit*, as an evidence that we are a nation *whom he cares for*; and that *England* ſhall be yet the ſtage of Goſpel-purity, a ſhelter of innocent refugees, and the greateſt inſtance of concord between prerogative and liberty, ſhould be the general cry to heaven: and of this number of petitioners is (though moſt unworthy)

Your affectionate humble ſervant,

LONDON,
March 8, 170$\frac{4}{5}$.

Thomas Bradbury.

SERMON THE FIRST.

God's Presence with a People the best Security.

Preached at Newcastle, 1700.

Psalm XLVI. 5.

God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved.

THIS is a Psalm of triumph, where we find the Church using a majestic language to those enemies, whom Providence had befooled and undermined. The first verse lets us see what her courage took its principal footing upon; *God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble* (*a*). This is a satisfactory answer both to foreign threats, and the inward objections of unbelief. In a confidence of this she discharges fear, and resolves to keep a steddiness under the greatest disturbance of nature: *Therefore we will not fear, though the earth be removed, though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof*, Selah (*b*). When the world is under the wildest convulsion, the believer is upon another bottom, and therefore keeps his settlement. He is built upon the *rock, against which the gates of hell cannot prevail.*

Now

(*a*) Psal. xlvi. 1. (*b*) Psal. xlvi. 2, 3.

Now lest this challenge should pass for a groundless boast, the Psalmist runs the old encouragement over again. *There is a river, the streams whereof make glad the city of our God, the holy place of the most High* (*c*). Notwithstanding the laborious devices of malice against this sacred interest, yet the Church has the best assurances of relief and solace. Here is a *river* of flowing comfort, that shall never be interrupted by an external malice, nor run itself dry with any inward expence or corruption. It is to be a lasting cordial. Now that which he here represents in a similitude, he speaks out in the plainest terms in the text I have chosen, *God is in the midst of her*; this is his covenant with his people, the river that supplied so many healing streams.

He is in the midst of *her*, that is, *the city of God*, as appears from the former verses; or *Mount Sion* the place of religious worship in *David*'s time, and thereby endeared both to the company of saints, and the smiles of heaven. Sometimes it is called *the joy of all the land, the tribes of God go thither* (*d*). And it is represented as the seat of a peculiar presence; *Out of Sion the perfection of beauty God has shined* (*e*). And again, *The Lord loves the gates of Sion more than all the dwellings of Jacob* (*f*). *He has chosen Sion, and desired it for his habitation; This is my rest for ever, here I will dwell, for I have desired it* (*g*). And as we often read in the New Testament, that the Church of GOD keeps this character, so when we meet with it in the Old, we are taught to put such a sense upon the word, as agrees to the state of Religion now, so that here by *the city of God*, which *the most High* has placed himself *in the midst* of, I understand the whole body of those that have really espoused his interest, in distinction from the rest of the world. And the text sounds forth the happiness of such a people in the fullest language, that *God*

(*c*) Psal. xlvi. 4.
(*d*) Psal. cxxii.
(*e*) Psal. l. 2.
(*f*) Psal. lxxxvii. 2.
(*g*) Psal. cxxxii. 13, 14.

God is in the midst of them. He is in every particular believer: this is a glory that we are bid to put to the test; for *if Christ be not in us*, we are *reprobates* (*h*). In another place, such are called *the temple of God* (*i*). But these words have reference to the privileges that are bestowed upon GOD's people in general. They make up one body: they live in common upon the grace that is lodged in the great head of the Church, and from whom it is conveyed with freedom and wonder. What I understand by the text you may take in this proposition.

GOD is and will be *in the midst* of his Church: or he will be always near his people in public occurrences. This is what the words principally mean, and, you know, it is what divine Providence directs us to mind this day. The method will be to shew,

I. Under what characters GOD is present with his people.
II. What his being *in the midst* of the Church imports.
III. The reasons or grounds of this wonderful kindness.
IV. The application.

I. Under what characters is GOD present with his people, or *in the midst of Sion?* This is set down as a favour, which the rest of the world are not sharers in, and therefore it must be inclusive of something better and more gracious than his omnipresence; for *he fills both heaven and earth with his glory:* it is the misery of the wicked, that in this world he is near them to observe their villainies; and in hell he will be a GOD at hand, to keep the flames alive with his own displeasure. But when he is said to be *in the midst* of his people, He is so,

1. As a Governor. He holds the reins of providence which determine the actions of every creature. He

(*h*) 2 Cor. xiii. 5. (*i*) 2 Cor. vi. 16.

He does *according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth* (*k*). But he is in a more peculiar manner the *King of Saints*, and therefore the Church pleads this title as an argument for GOD's mercy, and a distinction from their enemies. *We are thine, thou never bare'st rule over them; they are not called by thy name* (*l*). Holy souls are all subjected to his disposal. He has his own way of managing them. He prescribes laws for the rule of life, and he makes them successful upon his servants. He is the master of their hearts: he keeps up a garison there to sway the soul, and fulfil his pleasure. *The Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our King* (*m*). He rules with arbitrary grace, makes them *willing in the day of his power*, uses such a sweetness of authority as at once both pleases and overcomes the subject. *His* they are, and *him they serve* (*n*). Whatever remains of stubbornness they may feel, yet there is not one soul of those that are devoted to him, but who have an heart at his service. In this sense GOD is in his Church. He *walks among the golden candlesticks* to fill them with his own light. He prescribes the laws of obedience. It is his prerogative to rule consciences; this is an authority that he has never given out of his own hand.

2. As a Guardian. *In Judah God is known; his name is great in Israel; there he broke the arrows of the bow, the shield, the sword, the battle* (*o*). He is present with his people, for their protection as well as management. He is the *hope of Israel, the saviour thereof in a time of trouble*; and therefore will not be as a *stranger in the land, or a way-faring man, that turns aside, to tarry for a night* (*p*). This the prophet pleads, why he should not be as *a mighty man that cannot save*, because he was *in the midst of them*. His Saints

(*k*) Dan. iv. 35.
(*l*) Isai. lxiii. 19.
(*m*) Isai. xxxiii. 22.
(*n*) Acts xxvii. 23.
(*o*) Psal. lxxvi. 1, 3.
(*p*) Jer. xiv. 8, 9.

Saints are chosen out of the world; their interest, methods, progress and characters are peculiar. The avowance of piety makes them a fair mark to a general censure. If they stand up for GOD's honour, they run a great venture of their own. There is an intail of reproaches upon those that dare to be serious. A devotedness to the will of heaven is the most affronting spectacle to corrupt nature. As men have renounced the beauties of holiness themselves, so they love not to read their own condemnation in the zeal of others.

And since vexation, disgrace, turmoil and malice are the ordinary train that follow seriousness, it is but just to conclude, that such as GOD pitches upon for his service, should have a stock to bear them out in all this expence and hazard. Thus he comforts his people, *Thou art my servant, I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away; fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God, I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee, and uphold thee with the right-hand of my righteousness. They that were incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded; they shall be as nothing; and they that strive with thee shall perish* (*q*). Is he the master of our souls? Do we lie at the conduct of his grace? And will he let us be losers by our allegiance? Shall we ever have occasion to recant a life of duty, or grieve over all our labours for him? No surely; the character that he is known by promises other things. It sounds harsh in the name of our GOD, to say he is one who plunges his people into ruffle and disquiet, and then withdraws when they are in the hottest battle. This is cross both to the glories of his love, and the usual roads of his providence. *When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee* (*r*).

(*q*) Isai. xli. 9, 10, 11. (*r*) Isai. xliii. 2.

As GOD knew what a venom and opposition piety would expose us to, so he resolved to stand by his people in the worst extremity. *The Heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved, he uttered his voice, the earth melted. The Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge* (*s*). As no distress of persecution shall cool the believer's zeal for him, so neither shall it stop the course of his favours. Our *Beloved is ours* (*t*) as intirely as we are *his*. Religion looks well in the christian's eyes, when it meets with all the contradiction of sinners. Such an one takes pleasure in *Sion*'s *dust*, and *favours* the disjointed *stones*; and as the cause we espouse is never the worse for the clouds that darken it, so the hazard we run in those evil days fixes no vileness upon us. The soul shall be amiable to GOD, when others are doing their utmost to plunder his reputation and interest. Is he our Governor, and will he not be our Guardian? Will he let his people be run down, when they fight his battles? No, the honour of his goodness cannot endure it.

It is love to him that has made them so negligent of their worldly credit and advantage: and we may suppose them to argue in *David*'s words. *For thy sake we have borne reproach, shame has covered our faces. The zeal of thine house has eaten us up* (*u*). "Could we "have stood unconcerned, when Religion begun to "lose its freshness, and decline into a shadow: Could "our zeal have allowed the abuses that were thrown "upon thy name, we might have lived in quiet, and "never made ourselves the jest of profaneness. But "we found a secret impatience that would not let us "alone; something that disturbed the sloth of nature: "we were *jealous for the Lord of hosts:* we must be "meddling with the corruptions of men, and trying "a battle with those impieties, that were dearer than "life itself. And what pity is it, that the principles, "which

(*s*) Psal. xlvi. 6, 7.
(*t*) Cant. ii. 14.
(*u*) Psal. lxix. 7, 9.

" which made us loyal, should leave us miserable?
" That in our choice of thee, we have nothing to re-
" pay the expences of an obedient zeal."

It is below the reputation of our LORD, to put by the soul that runs for shelter under his wings. *O thou afflicted, tossed with tempests, and not comforted; I will lay thy stones with fair colours,—and great shall be the peace of thy children* (x). He is the protector of *Israel*. He allows them guards, as well as laws; that as the one may train them in a course of duty, so the other may secure them from all incroachment. As he keeps the government in his own hands, and will allow no rival in the honour of that post; so he is the only trustee and defence of his people. It is as much his work to save, as to guide them. He will not venture them intirely upon a created care, but placeth himself *in the midst of Sion. God is known in her palaces for a refuge* (y). These two general heads might be ranged into many particulars: but the time bids me proceed to shew,

II. What is implied in GOD's being *in the midst* of a people.

1. Great *Love*. They are the *Temple of God*, as he hath said, *I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people* (z). Had their company been a disgust to him, he would have removed his habitation. When the Jews had grieved him with their murmurs and unbelief, the amends that his anger would have of them was the withdrawment of a gracious presence. In that one threatning he sums up all possible desolation. *I will not go up in the midst of thee, for thou art a stiff-necked people* (a). They became nauseous in his eyes: he did not delight in their numbers, but was for calling off that providence, which was both the guard and

(x) Isai. liv. 11, 13.
(y) Psal. xlviii. 3.
(z) 2 Cor. vi. 16.
(a) Exod. xxxiii. 3.

glory of their camp. There is nothing that could threaten a fuller vengeance, than his refusal to go along with them. The suspence of those favourable smiles had vexation and calamity enough in it. *He abhorred them, because of the provoking of his sons and his daughters; and he said, I will hide my face from them, I will see what their end will be* (*b*). And as these words are the language of a sore resentment, so his presence is the most amiable conviction of love.

When he says, that he will be *in the midst* of a people; such a promise sounds the great delight that he has in them. A studied society speaks an endearment between the persons that design and contrive it: and GOD's attendance of his chosen, is a proof of those labouring bowels which he has for them. *The Lord's portion is his people: Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. He found him in a desart land, and the waste howling wilderness: he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye. As an eagle stirs up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreads abroad her wings, takes them, bears them on her wings; so the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange God with him* (*c*).

He enjoys himself in the crouds of his servants. The duty of their homage and subjection, the freeness of his own condescension and mercy, are what he is pleased with. His love throws the most cheerful darts upon them, and all these rebound up to his bosom again in mighty shouts of praise. He delights to be encircled with an admiring throng, who are the favourites of his breast, and the trumpets of his glory. *He inhabits the praises of Israel* (*d*). Thus when we read of the exalted state which Christ fills in heaven, we find his honour is assisted by the surrounding crouds. This he claimed as the wages of his service. *Father, I will, that they whom thou hast given me, be with me where*

(*b*) Deut. xxxii. 19, 20.
(*c*) Deut. xxxii. 9—12.
(*d*) Psal. xxii. 3.

where I am, that they may behold my glory (*e*). And this is paid with the greatest fairness and justice. He is called *a Lamb in the midst of the throne* (*f*). He lives in the heart of triumph, and is the very centre of numerous praises. From him, in this station, they derive a blessedness, and to him they direct all their *hallelujahs. Worthy is the Lamb, that was slain, to receive honour*, &c (*g*). So when he is said to be *in the midst of Sion*, it imports his great solace in communion with his people. *If thy presence*, saith Moses, *go not with us, carry us not up hence; for wherein shall it be known that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? Is it not in that thou goest with us* (*h*)?

2. Diligent *Attendance* over them. He has chosen a post, that is most serviceable to observation and remark. He places himself there, that he may with the greater ease deal about the pensions of his love. Here it is, that he follows malicious enemies in all their tracks and windings. He sees how their plots are woven, and carried on towards something of a ripeness. The hidden frames of mischief are open to his eye. There are no such corners upon earth, as can give their wickedness a full secrecy. *Hell is naked before him, and destruction has no covering* (*i*). It is possible indeed the haters of *Sion* may dig low for the undermining of the cause which bears heaven's stamp. The design in itself may be cunning and probable, defended with the best confederacy and darkness. We may be wrapt up in our own ease, without the least whisper of scruple and jealousy; and all this time iniquity may be upon its march to our destruction.

But GOD numbers the steps of the contrivance. He has stinted their policy, and *said to the proud waves, Hitherto shall ye go, and no farther.* So that the very *wrath of man has praised him, and the remainder of that*

(*e*) John xvii. 24.
(*f*) Rev. v. 6.
(*g*) Rev. v. 13.
(*h*) Exod. xxxiii. 15, 16.
(*i*) Job xxvi. 6.

wrath he has *restrained. They shall surely gather together, but not by me; whosoever shall gather together against thee, shall fall for thy sake* (*k*). He sees with what caution and leisure they proceed forwards, what reputation and confidence they give to their own inventions: and all this time he jeers their devices, beholds them with a generous scorn, knowing how small a turn of Providence can dissolve them. *He that sits in the heavens shall laugh, the Lord shall have them in derision; saying, Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Sion* (*l*). Their design is bold and foolish, their methods of obtaining it poor and vain: they aim at no less than the dethroning of that Prince, whom GOD's oath has assured of eternal grandeur. But in defiance of their mischief, he shall reign, and bathe his sword in the blood of the mighty. Thus you see our defence is from him that *keeps Israel*, who *neither slumbers nor sleeps* (*m*). For *except the Lord keep the city, the watchmen watch but in vain* (*n*).

3. *Readiness* to give seasonable relief. Thus in the context, he is called a *present help in time of trouble* (*o*); which explains his being *in the midst* of his people: and the words that immediately follow are to the same purpose, *God shall help her, and that right early.* He is not afar off, when calamity urges his appearance. We have not a SAVIOUR to seek, when we should use him. He is to be found *in the midst of Sion.* Enemies cannot get the start of him. He was never so slow in his mercy, as to come too late. *Abraham* acknowledges this, when he calls a place, *Jehovah-jireh, in the mount of the Lord it shall be seen* (*p*). There may indeed be a long delay, but it is only to sweeten the deliverance, and take a fuller blow at rebellious sinners. *The vision is yet for an appointed time; but at the end it shall speak, and not lie; though it tarry, wait for*

(*k*) Isai. liv. 15.
(*l*) Psal. ii. 4, 6.
(*m*) Psal. cxxi. 3.
(*n*) Psal. cxxvii. 1.
(*o*) Psal. xlvi. 1.
(*p*) Gen. xxii. 14.

for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry (*q*). He is always furnished with arrows to humble the contradiction of men, and proclaim *salvation for Jacob*; and sometimes his readiness to save, shews itself with so much wonder, that the same report tells us both of our danger and our escape. We never come to know that mischief was upon the stocks, till we are fully assured that GOD has blasted it. When he *turned again our captivity, we were like them that dream* (*r*). Providence does with the same breath intimate, what might have been our case, and shew us what the overruling votes of heaven were.

We have often received a mercy, which we never saw any necessity to pray for; our first address to GOD has been in a joyful gratitude. He has always a sufficient number of blessings ready for every distress that can befal his people. That promise carries a wonderful encouragement in it. *Before they call, I will answer; and whilst they are yet speaking, I will hear* (*s*). We account it an extraordinary privilege to have the ear of GOD, and humbly to wrest deliverance with strong cries and petitions: but here are stranger methods of love. Mercy is in haste to save us: as if prayer and salvation were at strife which should run the faster. The very moment of intreaty is often the set time wherein GOD visits *Sion*; deliverance flies on with that resolution and vigour, that we have scarce leisure to conclude the request, before we see it answered. We are forced to be abrupt, and break off with a pleasing disorder and confusion. The returning prodigal had framed an address to his Father: he designed not only to own the foulest guilt, but to express his value for the meanest favour; *I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son, make me as one of thine hired servants* (*t*): But ere he could get his speech out, his discourse is

(*q*) Hab. ii. 3.
(*r*) Psal. cxxvi. 1.
(*s*) Isai. lxv. 24.
(*t*) Luke xv. 18, 19.

interrupted by an hasty love: he cuts it off by the half; his concluding part is prevented with a full assurance of welcome and kindness. So ready is GOD to appear for the salvation of his chosen.

III. What are the *grounds* and *reasons* of so near a presence? Or, what cause have we to hope for for so great a blessing? *The reason of the hope that is in us*, I shall just mention in three particulars.

1. The *nature of God's love* is such, that it gives us ground to look for this privilege. He has *chosen Sion*, and he does not run back from his choice, but will *redeem her poor with judgment, and her converts with righteousness* (*u*). *The gifts and calling of God are without repentance* (*x*). *Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will not I forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands, thy walls are continually before me* (*y*).

2. The express *language of that covenant*, that is *ordered in all things and sure*, doubles our encouragement. He has declared his heart in a promise, that *by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we may have strong consolation* (*z*).

3. The *interest of his glory* is nearly concerned herein. He is no loser by any goodness to his people. It puts a reputation upon his name. The upright adore such a Providence with gratitude; and a praise is forced out of sinners in their complaints and vexation. *The righteous shall see it, and be glad, and all iniquity shall stop her mouth* (*a*). *Ye shall know, that I am in the midst of Israel; and that I am the Lord your God, and none else; and my people shall never be ashamed* (*b*). Nay, those witnesses that stand at a distance, who are not parties either in the disappointment

(*u*) Isai. i. 27.
(*x*) Rom. xi. 29.
(*y*) Isai. xlix. 15, 16.
(*z*) Hab. vi. 18.
(*a*) Psal. cvii. 42.
(*b*) Joel ii. 27.

ment or the relief. These can read a GOD in such proceedings. *They said among the heathen, The Lord has done great things for them* (*c*). *Jethro* professes, *Now I know, that the Lord is greater than all gods, because in the thing wherein they dealt proudly, he was above them* (*d*).

APPLICATION.

1. Learn the happiness and safety of GOD's own people, *Cry and shout, thou inhabitant of Sion, for great is the holy One of Israel in the midst of thee* (*e*). *There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rides upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky; the eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are everlasting arms; and he shall thrust out the enemy before thee, and shall say, Destroy them: happy art thou, O Israel, who is like unto thee? A people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and the sword of thine excellency: thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee, and thou shalt tread upon their high places* (*f*). If GOD be *in the midst of Sion*, then the *weapons formed against her* strike equally at him: so that when the enemies cry out, *Raze, raze it even to the ground* (*g*); if they will make clear work, they must humble the Majesty of heaven. He is *in the midst* of his people; and if sinners prevail, GOD and Saints fall together. And what comfort is this to the sons of *Sion*, to think that their interest is so woven into his, that if they be injured, he must be a loser? *He that touches them, touches the apple of his eye* (*h*). When the *Egyptians* were ready to make *Israel* the morsel of their pride, GOD steps in as a wall of partition between the two armies, so that there was no way of getting at the Jews, but by striking through Omnipotence. *Happy is*

(*c*) Psal. cxxvi. 3.
(*d*) Exodus xviii. 11.
(*e*) Isai. xii. 6.
(*f*) Deut. xxxiii. 26, 27, 29.
(*g*) Psal. cxxxvii. 7.
(*h*) Zech. ii. 8.

is the people that is in such a case; yea, happy is that people, whose God is the Lord (*i*).

2. Let us behave ourselves *suitably to such a presence*, lest we provoke him from his post, and cause him to say, *I abhor the excellency of Jacob, and hate his palaces* (*k*).

And if GOD's being *in the midst* of a people speaks their happiness, and calls for their gratitude, then all who are concerned for *England*, or the *Protestant interest*, may at once see their mercy and duty; what *David* says of the *Jews*, Providence allows me to apply to this nation. *He exalteth the horn of his people, the praise of all his Saints; even of the children of Israel, a people near unto him. Praise ye the Lord* (*l*). We are not only put in mind of that ancient deliverance, which is engraven upon the worship of this Day, but also those *late appearances* that GOD has made on our behalf: so that I may say, as *Moses* to the *Israelites*; *Know you this day, for I speak not with your children which have not known, and which have not seen the chastisement of the Lord your God, his greatness, his mighty hand, and his stretched-out arm; but your eyes have seen all the great things of the Lord which he did* (*m*).

He is a stranger in *England*, that needs telling how much, in some distant reigns, the throne has been a curse to the nation. It is a public calamity, when persons, lodged in so great a trust, are either benumbed with debauchery, or imbittered with a cruel zeal; when they have a fair claim to no other title, than that of *active tyrants*, or *royal drones*. But it is our happiness, that GOD has recovered the credit of the land, by giving us *one*, who is framed for the greatness which he appears in. He has been used in the most noble services. He is known to be the scourge of tyrants, the moderator of *Europe*, and the best example of government. He maintained the war

(*i*) Psal. cxliv. 15.
(*k*) Amos vi. 8.
(*l*) Psal. cxlviii. 14.
(*m*) Deut. xi. 2, 7.

war with glory and success, and at last changed it for an honourable peace. Providence has made him its happy charge. Let not us *put out the light of Israel* by sinning away so great a mercy; for *if we still do wickedly, we shall be consumed, both we and our King* (*n*). Let us be serving him with fervent prayers, engaging the best guards in his defence. *Blessed is he that comes to save us in the name of the Lord; we have blessed him out of the house of the Lord* (*o*).

(*n*) 1 Sam. xi. 25. | (*o*) Psal. cxviii. 26.

SERMON

SERMON II.

The Nature of that JOY which GOD's Government of his CHURCH obligeth to.

Preached at NEWCASTLE, 1701.

PSALM CXLIX. 2.

Let the children of Sion be joyful in their King.

SOME tell us, that the Psalms are ranged into such an order, as to describe the believer's passage through the world. They let us see his first change, and his gradual advances. They begin with a true apprehension of *blessedness* (*a*); that which first has an influence upon our choice: they are continued in a mixture of lamentation and triumph, very much resembling the compound life that we have upon earth: but they end with such intire praise, as if one foot were already in heaven. The Book is shut up with pure rapture, in such language as becomes an inhabitant of *paradise*, rather than a passenger to it.

The occasion of this Psalm, seems to be some remarkable deliverance that GOD afforded his people; for we find they are allowed a superiority over those that used to affright them. *A two-edged sword was put into their hand, to execute vengeance upon the heathen*, &c. *This honour have all his Saints* (*b*). The Psalm

(*a*) Psalm i. (*b*) Psal. cxlix. 6—9.

Pſalm begins with a demand to gratitude. *Praiſe ye the Lord*, hallelujah; this is one of heaven's notes. *Sing unto the Lord a new ſong*, as freſh as the mercy that ſupplies it, *in the congregation of his Saints* (*c*). Make the name of his goodneſs general; that as every ſerious perſon has a ſhare in the Providence, ſo he may bear his part in this conſort. The ground of this is hinted at, *Let Iſrael rejoice in him that made him; let the children of Sion be joyful in their King* (*d*). Here the Church names GOD under two titles, both of which do not only oblige but ſweeten praiſe.

1. As a *Creator*. *Let Iſrael rejoice in him that made him*; underſtand this either of *his omnipotence*, that framed all things, both the righteous and the wicked: his intereſt in our Being is matter of joy. *Praiſe him ſun and moon, all ye ſtars of light; ye heavens of heavens, and waters above the heavens; let them praiſe the name of the Lord, for he commanded, and they were created* (*e*). We may alſo interpret this of *his peculiar goodneſs* to them as his people. He is more immediately *the maker of Iſrael*. *Every one that is called by my name, I have created him for my glory, I have formed him, yea, I have made him* (*f*). He is more nearly the author of his Church, the ſpring of all Religion. *Sion* is the creature of his love, and that firſt care which built her up calls for gladneſs. We may rejoice in that GOD, who made the Church, and who has graciouſly brought us into it.

2. As a *King*. *Let the children of Sion be joyful in their King*. Conſider him not only as one that firſt brought them into a covenant with himſelf, but admire the continuing mercy of his protection and government. He does not collect a ſociety, and then leave it: no, there is a ſteddineſs in his rule, and a conſtant preſence of authority with them: as he was their

(*c*) Pſal. cxlix. 1.
(*d*) Pſal. cxlix. 2.
(*e*) Pſal. cxlviii. 3, 4, 5.
(*f*) Iſai. xliii. 7.

their Maker, so he will be their King. That love that gave them their first Being will secure it.

The text is a summons to the work of praise. We have,

1. The *persons* called to this employment, *The children of Sion.* This title is applicable to believers under the New Testament. *We are come to Mount Sion* (*g*); and we stand in the relation of children, for *the Jerusalem above is the mother of us all* (*h*). So that here we are to understand such as are united to her in affection, interest and hazard: who love nothing so highly as the general good of Religion, and venture all that they have in defence of it. *Sion* being the *place of worship*, this title may express their temper, that they were *the generation of seekers*, a people who made their stated visits to GOD, and scorned to be ashamed of their intimacy or service. *Sion* also was the seat of a *peculiar presence*, where the Almighty took up his abode. And so *the children of Sion*, are such as derive a nature from the GOD that dwells there; who wear his image, and consequently must have principles of allegiance to defend his glory.

2. The *duty* they were to join in, or the *affection* of soul which they were to stir up on this occasion; *Let them be joyful.* Though they have work enough for tears, yet that must now give way. All the springs of vigour should awake, and fill the glad solemnity. Let every heir of the kingdom unloose his bondage of spirit. Whatever soul is akin to *Sion*, let his relation make him a sharer in the common joys. Let praise rise with mercy, and as the courses of Providence are extraordinary, strive to imitate them with something peculiar in duty.

3. The *object* and *provocation* of this joy: that which *receives* it, and that which *stirs* it up. *Let them be joyful in their King*; in what he *does*, and in what he *is*: let his works quicken it, let himself have it.

This

(*g*) Hab. xii. 23. (*h*) Gal. iv. 26.

This is to be understood of CHRIST, whom the Father has appointed to the chief place of note. *I have set my King upon My holy hill of Sion* (*i*). That hill from which believers take their titles, and to which they aim their devotions. The truth of our LORD's government the Church then believed, and the application of it they foresaw. For if *Abraham saw his day, and was glad* (*k*), we may well suppose the same of that age, that did not look through so great a distance; but who found the promises ripening, and had their faith enlarged with new discoveries. *David speaks concerning him, for being a prophet, he knew that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne* (*l*). CHRIST then, is the King of *Sion*, and carries on the duties of his empire two ways:

(1.) *Spiritually*; in the controls of grace: his *people are made willing in the day of his power* (*m*): he binds them in cords of love, and makes all their perverseness yield to the arguments that give it battle. He maintains them with a secret influence: they are *kept by his mighty power through faith unto salvation* (*n*.)

(2.) *Providentially*. He is the *head over all things unto the Church* (*o*). He has authority to dispose of thrones, tumble down kingdoms, and shake the foundations of the world, for their security. He, that took such care to furnish the *mansions* (*p*) in heaven for them, will not lose them by the way. And we often find what remarkable changes his Providence works upon their account; if earthly greatness will not serve his Church, it shall be crushed under it. The interest, that is usually sunk so low, may have the lift of a kind hand, and come to trample upon pomp, and debase oppression. Now this is matter of joy.

(*i*) Psal. ii. 6.
(*k*) John viii. 56.
(*l*) Acts ii. 25, 30.
(*m*) Psal. cx. 2.
(*n*) 1 Pet. i. 5.
(*o*) Ephes. i. 22.
(*p*) John xiv. 1, 2.

joy. *Thou shalt thresh the mountains, and make the hills as chaff: thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them: and thou shalt rejoice in the Lord, and glory in the holy One of Israel* (*q*).

The meaning of the text may be contained in this proposition.

All true Christians are especially bound to rejoice in CHRIST, *the King of the Church*, upon any extraordinary favour that he vouchsafes to it. I shall,

I. Enquire what there is in the consideration of his being *their King* to excite this joy.

II. Explain the nature of this affection or joy in him.

III. Shew why this is more peculiarly a duty after some eminent deliverance.

IV. Application.

I. Let us consider the object of this joy, *Sion's King*. And here I will restrain myself with the context of these words, and the business of *this day*; both of which oblige my thoughts to his providential kingdom. And there are three things more especially, which deserve to be the matter of a Christian's joy.

1. *His great perfections.* He has all royal qualities.

A King's nature; every thing to fill a glory, and claim our love. He has both an ample capacity, and a state that is level to it. *I speak the things that I have made*, says *David*, *touching the King*: and this is his first character, that *grace is poured into his lips, and God has blessed him for ever* (*r*). And as his furniture for this work is *above the sons of men*, so is his refreshment and solace in it; *God has anointed him with the oil of gladness above his fellows* (*s*). He has an arm

(*q*) Isai. xli. 15, 16.
(*r*) Psal. xlv. 1, 2.
(*s*) Psal. xlv. 3.

that is fit to rule, a wisdom that never darkens, a power that cannot yield. *In thy Majesty ride prosperously, because of truth, and meekness, and righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things: thine arrows are sharp in the hearts of the King's enemies, whereby the people shall fall under thee* (*t*). He tells us no less himself, *Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom; I am understanding, I have strength* (*u*).

The angels adore his capacity in a chearful homage. All the people of that upper world, where he has fixed his throne, cannot but reverence the Majesty that is within view. This is *the song of the Lamb, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are all thy ways, thou King of Saints: Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? All nations shall come and worship before thee, for thy judgments are made manifest* (*x*). This is a sovereign that fills his empire; he governs without difficulty or mistake: and this may be matter of joy to GOD's people, to think that he, who has the management of them, is so capable of answering his trust. He has a purity that adorns his person, inspires his laws, and glorifies his palace; such an one *becomes us, who is holy, harmless, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens* (*y*).

He has *a King's heart*, a love as wide as his dominion; and may not this stir up the affections of those who are named after him, and have put their trust in him? Consider him in all his Titles, and they express an amiable grandeur. *His name is Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace* (*z*). The noble attendants that surround him do not *make* his excellencies, but only *admire* them. His perfections are not the effect of praise, but rather the matter of it. This is a King, whom

(*t*) Psal. xlv. 4, 5.
(*u*) Prov. viii. 14.
(*x*) Rev. xv. 3, 4.
(*y*) Heb vii. 26.
(*z*) Isai. ix. 6.

whom we may name with courage. *The Lord shall reign for ever, even thy God, O Sion, to all generations* (*a*). Something of his worth is seen here; and though it be but little, yet there is so much as will bear up a Christian's triumph. He is *glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders* (*b*): and as far as this is discovered, it cannot but heighten our joy. *Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary; who is so great a God as our God? Thou art the God that dost wonders, thou hast declared thy strength among the people* (*c*). *Honour and majesty are before him, strength and beauty are in his sanctuary* (*d*).

2. His actual government. *The Lord reigns, let the earth rejoice, let the multitude of isles be glad thereof* (*e*). He does not let his qualifications sleep unemployed, but declares them in the most beautiful conduct. *The Lord reigns, he is clothed with majesty; he is clothed with strength, wherewith he has girded himself*; and, because of this, *the world is stablished, that it cannot be moved* (*f*). He has Power to conquer for his people, Wisdom to contrive their steps, and Love to save them. *His throne is in the heavens* (*g*); but this lower world is subject to his rule. Though the enemies of the Church may think themselves the only gods upon earth, yet they have had a terrible necessity to own that there is One above them. He may, for a long time, hide his sovereignty, and seem to neglect the courses of government: but justice will run in its old channel again. The space of indulgence that sinners had, shall wear out, and he will put on a new zeal for his people. For *the Lord will not cast off his people, neither will he forsake his inheritance; but judgment shall return to righteousness* (*h*).

(*a*) Psal. cxxvi. 10.
(*b*) Exod. xv. 11.
(*c*) Psal. lxxvii. 13, 14.
(*d*) Psal. xcvi. 6.
(*e*) Psal. xcvii. 1.
(*f*) Psal. xciii. 1.
(*g*) Psal. ciii 19.
(*h*) Psal. xciv. 15.

Sometimes we are afraid that GOD has forſaken us: the wicked threaten and ſucceed: there is a conſtant obedience in all things to their wiſhes: but all this while GOD *laughs at them* (*i*), and will in a little time publiſh the diſdain in providential thunder. What the Pſalmiſt prays for, is a mercy that all ages of the Church have met with, that the GOD *to whom vengeance belongs, the Judge of the earth, would lift up himſelf, and render a reward to the proud* (*k*). He takes care that ambition do not ſwell too large, that innocency be not quite deſtroyed. And certainly this is matter of joy to Sion's children, to think that their GOD is univerſal monarch. He who loves us, has all things under his control, and will not ſuffer our ruin. The Pſalmiſt repeats his ſummons to praiſe upon this conſideration: *Sing praiſes to our God, ſing praiſes to the King, ſing praiſes; for God is the King of all the earth. Sing ye praiſes with underſtanding: God reigns over the heathen, God ſits upon the throne of his holineſs* (*l*). *Nebuchadnezzar* had this doctrine preached to him by the captive Jews, and proved, beyond all contradiction, by ſeven years baniſhment from human ſociety. He then learned, that *the moſt High rules in the kingdoms of men* (*m*).

Though ſinners are under no ſubjection to grace, yet there are reſolutions of Providence which they cannot break. The enmity of their natures makes them angry at heaven; but actual diſobedience is a thing out of their reach. *The counſel of the Lord ſhall ſtand* (*n*). He is the only King of the creation; and though they are adverſaries of his holineſs, he can make them the tools of his power. The *Aſſyrian* was uſed to variety of purpoſes: he is firſt the *rod of God's indignation*, and then the *mark* of it (*o*). Grace may be reſiſted, but ſovereignty will not. They that *would not have him*

(*i*) Pſal. ii. 4.
(*k*) Pſal xciv. 1, 2.
(*l*) Pſal. xlvii. 6, 7, 8.
(*m*) Dan. iv. 32.
(*n*) Prov. xix. 21.
(*o*) Iſai. x. 5, 16.

him to reign over them, are brought out againſt their wills, and *ſlain before his face* (*p*). The Spirit is often quenched, but Juſtice lives. Sinners have life and death, obedience and miſery offered to them; the firſt choice is theirs, but after that is done, GOD will chooſe next. He puts it to them, whether they will own him or no; but it does not lie at their choice whether miſery ſhall avenge their refuſal. Had it not been ſo, the Church would, long ere this, have ſunk under the tumult of malice. But *God rules in Jacob to the ends of the earth* (*q*). He ſits at the helm of Providence, and directs all its courſes according to his own pleaſure. So that we rejoice in a King who fills every part of the world, every moment of time, with a great preſence of ſovereignty.

3. The Church's propriety in both. He is their King. His qualifications are to entertain their love, his actual government to ſecure their privileges. What he is, makes up their portion; what he does, is for their advantage. They have an intereſt in his nature, and a benefit in all his providences. *He ſaid, Surely they are my people, children that will not lie; ſo he was their Saviour* (*r*). He is a father to them, when they lie under oppreſſive cruelty. Theſe clouds may hide the relation from public view, but they cannot bury it: and in a little time, his bowels will break through the oppoſition, and *command deliverance for Jacob* (*s*). Thus ſaith the LORD to *Pharaoh, Iſrael is my ſon, my firſt-born; and I ſay unto thee, Let my ſon go, that he may ſerve me* (*t*).

The enemies of the Church are ſometimes tampering with divine love, trying how long it will bear their rudeneſs, without an open reſentment: but they uſually carry the experiment too far, and draw out their cruelties to the Saints, till conſuming zeal is

(*p*) Luke xix. 17.
(*q*) Pſal lix. 13.
(*r*) Iſai. lxiii. 8.
(*s*) Pſal. xliv. 4.
(*t*) Exod. iv. 22, 23.

weary of forbearance. The *covenant* that GOD has brought his people into, is, like his own nature, unchangeable and *everlasting* (*u*). *Thou Israel art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend. Thou, whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the chief men thereof, and said unto thee, Thou art my servant. I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away* (*x*). Till enemies can quench the love of his heart, disturb the firmness of a promise, and break the relation between him and the Church, their malice must live in vain, and die in contempt. He cannot look upon believers, but he remembers the bond he is in to them, and that eternal love which inclined him to begin this relation. *Whosoever*, saith he to his Church, *shall gather together against thee, shall fall for thy sake* (*y*). Not for any worthiness of thine own, but *for thy sake* as joined in the same covenant *with me*; and so the reason devolves again upon himself.

And what a ground of joy is this to those *whose God is the Lord* (*z*)? Is he so capable of ruling, and actually possessed of government? *Be glad, O ye righteous*; see what an arm it is you trust in. His qualifications are glorious, his actual rule uninterrupted; and both these are for you. Is he excellent? that is to make your portion the better. Is he busy in every providence? that is to secure you from the enemy's rage. *Let the children of Sion be joyful in their King.*

II. What is it to *joy in Sion's King*, after a remarkable deliverance?

Answ. This may be expressed several ways:

1. In a more admiring opinion of his excellencies. *Who is God, save the Lord? Who is a rock, like our God?*

(*u*) 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.
(*x*) Isai. xli. 8, 9.
(*y*) Isai. liv. 15.
(*z*) Psal. cxliv. 15.

God (*a*)? The ſoul that is truly gracious, cannot but have ſome valuable thoughts of GOD at the loweſt; but when diſcouragements are removed, and heaven is peculiarly kind, then adoration ſhould fill with the mercy. *Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power: thy right hand, O Lord, has daſhed in pieces the enemy* (*b*). The wicked make their whole converſation a ſlight upon GOD, as if his arm were not deſerving of reverence, or his grace of choice. *They ſay unto God, Depart from us; and what can the Almighty do for them* (*c*)? And the hypocrite is really of the ſame temper, though he has the art to conceal it. His devotion is a ſtrain; the gravity of his looks and actions is no more than a compliment. His inward part deſpiſes the Majeſty whom he pretends to adore. He has no awful proſpect of Omnipotence, no ſenſible taſte of the divine love. Nay, the Chriſtian himſelf may run low in this temper, and *lightly eſteem the rock of his ſalvation* (*d*).

When Sion ſaid, *God had forſaken her* (*e*); was there not reproach enough in that language? As the *ſtrength of faith gives glory to him* (*f*), ſo the ſucceſſes of unbelief are a robbery upon his honour. Could infinite goodneſs fail, or eternal truth die? Can the ſupreme nature change, or the articles of an everlaſting covenant be repealed? No leſs than this horrid blaſphemy is lodged in theſe deſperate ſtrains. Now when the King of the Church declares his majeſty and kindneſs in ſome providence, it is time to drop our ſuſpicions with ſhame. *When he turned again the captivity of Sion, we were like them that dreamed* (*g*). We were ſo far from believing beforehand, that we doubted of it when the mercy came: but *then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with*

(*a*) Pſal. xviii. 31.
(*b*) Exod. xv. 6.
(*c*) Job xxii. 17.
(*d*) Deut. xxxii. 15.
(*e*) Iſai. xlix. 16.
(*f*) Rom. ii. 20.
(*g*) Pſal. cxxvi. 1, 2.

ſinging: The Lord has done great things for us. Our firſt duties of joy are performed this way: we ſhould here take occaſion to ſee the height of his throne, the compaſs of his government, and the cloſeneſs of his love to us.

2. In an hearty gratitude for all mercies received. The kindneſs that comes from heaven ſhould draw our hearts back again with it. *What ſhall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me? I will take the cup of ſalvation, and call upon the name of the Lord* (*h*). I will reliſh my deliverance: as the ſalvation is my mercy, ſo it ſhall be my cordial. When GOD ſpeaks peace with ſuch a powerful language, we ſhould not be ſilent in his praiſe. We cannot reward his love, any more than we could deſerve it; but it is highly reaſonable that we make a ſerious acknowledgment of it. *Give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good, his mercy endures for ever: let the redeemed of the Lord ſay ſo* (*i*). Though all are obliged to own it, yet *they* peculiarly. *Their* dumbneſs is inexcuſable.

Have we not prayed with all the violence of diſtreſs for this favour? And is it not worth our gratitude? There ſhould be a flame of love in proportion to our former earneſtneſs. A ſerious petitioner uſually vows ſomething of this kind beforehand. *Ariſe, O Lord, in thine anger, lift up thyſelf becauſe of the rage of mine enemies: awake for me to the judgment thou haſt commanded; ſo ſhall the congregation of the people compaſs thee about: for their ſakes therefore return thou on high* (*i*). It is a ſcandal upon the wicked, that though affliction makes them *howl upon their beds* (*l*), yet they are careleſs of all returns to the kindneſs that ſaves them. Our SAVIOUR takes notice, that *ten lepers* were cleanſed, but *nine* of them had no regard to the mercy, or their great Benefactor (*m*). Let not this

(*h*) Pſal. cxvi. 12, 13.
(*i*) Pſal. cvii. 1, 2.
(*k*) Pſal. vii. 6, 7.
(*l*) Hoſ. vii. 14.
(*m*) Luke xvii. 17.

this be our reproach, that, when heaven took so much pains to deliver us, we were graves to our blessings: that they lay dead in our memories, and did not stir us up to any payments of gratitude.

3. In a fresh devotion to his will, and a more zealous study of his honour. The gratitude that is not practical, both affronts GOD, and shames the deliverance. At such a time, he owns us for his people, and expects we should do the like back again. *The Lord is my strength and song, and is become my salvation. He is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him* (*n*). *Jacob* resolved, when he came *back to his father's house, the Lord should be his God* (*o*): he had chosen him before, and certainly would not leave him upon so low a condition; if he never came thither, that should be no parting matter: but upon this mercy, he will do it over again with a fuller love, and a more close attention to the vows that he made.

The joy that only loves to swill in an excess of riot, is *earthly, sensual, and devilish* (*p*). What, will you praise GOD with sin, and use all these favours as so many instruments of his dishonour? If serious Religion doth not gain ground in your hearts and lives, your mercies are lost, and your joys provoking.

4. In an open proclamation of his perfections and kindness. It is not enough that we have a rising love in our own hearts, and tell him in private our sense of his hand in the deliverance; but we are to spread his name, and *make his power known* (*q*). The mercy is public, and so should our expressions of gratitude be: that all those who see the Providence may hear it repeated in our gladness.

5. In a resolution to trust him in future straits. Our joy must look both ways; backwards, to the blessings

(*n*) Exod. xv. 2.
(*o*) Gen. xxviii. 21.
(*p*) Jam. iii. 15.
(*q*) Psal. cvi. 8.

bleſſings that are wrought out already; and forwards, to thoſe providences that are but now ripening. It is a reproach upon the Author of our mercies, if we dare not put confidence in him when trouble revives. *Let Mount Sion rejoice, let the daughters of Judah be glad, becauſe of thy judgments* (*r*). But this is not enough, he would have the memory of this kindneſs handed to following ages, as ſo much heartning to the faith of the Church then: *Mark well her bulwarks, conſider her palaces, that ye may tell it to the generations to come: for this God is our God for ever and ever, and he will be our guide until death* (*s*). We do not get our full diſcharge from fears, till we drop a ſinful nature, and fly above a noiſy world. After we have received a mercy, we may expect that affliction will take the next turn with us; and the uſe we are to make of preſent favours, is to venture ourſelves upon the ſame goodneſs in time to come. The forty-ſixth Pſalm was framed on purpoſe to admire GOD, becauſe he had made the nations ſilent, had quaſhed their tumult; making *wars to ceaſe to the ends of the earth, breaking the bow, cutting the ſpear aſunder, and burning the chariot in the fire* (*t*). Now the Church takes heart in the ſenſe of this, and makes a challenge as general as her troubles, *The Lord of hoſts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge* (*u*).

III. Why is this joy in Sion's King ſo peculiarly a duty after ſome eminent deliverance?

Anſw. 1. Then is GOD moſt glorified. He appears to be *greater than all gods* (*x*). Unbelief flatly denied him, and faith ſtaggered before him: but when he makes theſe remarkable appearances, wickedneſs is dumb, and grace recovered. The Church has then an anſwer ready at hand to all the charges of profaneneſs.

(*r*) Pſal. xlviii. 11.
(*s*) Pſal. xlviii. 13, 14.
(*t*) Pſal. xlvi. 9.
(*u*) Pſal. xlvi. 11.
(*x*) Exod. xviii. 11.

profaneneſs. When *the Heathen ſay, Where is now their God?* They can not only point upwards, and ſay, *Our God is in the heavens*; but can alſo add, *He has done whatſoever he pleaſed* (*y*). When the ſons of men were ſo bold, as to dare his power, who could be joyful? What ſerious perſon could act in ſo much diſcord to Providence, not to bleed when his LORD is wounded? *As with a ſword in my bones, do mine enemies reproach me; while they ſay continually, Where is thy God* (*z*)?

But in theſe ſignal mercies, he fetches up the honour that he ſeemed to loſe. The greatneſs that was denied comes to be felt. Experience baffles Atheiſm. The wretched cabal of enemies cannot diſbelieve the arm that is ſo heavy upon them. How great does a SAVIOUR appear, when ſinners are crawling, policy befooled, and oppreſſion humbled? And will it not ſtrike a joy through the honeſt heart, to ſee his LORD's praiſe in theſe freſh ornaments? *The children of Sion* muſt be glad, when *their King reigns* in deſpite of malice, and ſets his name above all robbery.

2. Then we have peculiar obligations to this work, becauſe this comes in as an anſwer of Faith and Prayer. *In that day it ſhall be ſaid, This is our God, we have waited for him, and he has ſaved us: we have waited for him, and will be glad and rejoice in his ſalvation* (*a*). Perhaps we have had many a ſtruggle with the throne of grace; and to find that we did not believe and cry in vain, muſt needs make our joy glorious. We have had but dull thoughts of this mercy before it came: neceſſity made us pray, and promiſes bid us hope; but we were ſometimes flat in requeſt, and oftner ſunk in expectation; ready to ſhut up an addreſs with deſpair, rather than keep aſking. It was an imagination that frequently returned, *We have cleanſed our hearts in vain* (*b*); GOD would not lend any regard to us.

Now,

(*y*) Pſal. cxv. 2, 3.
(*z*) Pſal. xlii. 10.
(*a*) Iſai. xxv. 9.
(*b*) Pſal. lxxiii. 13.

Now when petitions come back again changed into mercies; when faith is hung with those blessings, that it has been fighting for, may not the soul then rejoice? *I love the Lord, because he has heard my voice, and my supplications* (*c*). We then cry out as they, *Let Israel hope in the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercy, and with our God is plenteous redemption* (*d*).

3. Our outward hindrances in this work are all removed. We have then an open door; wide enough for the most extended zeal. In the heat of affliction, we had the scorn of enemies to flatten our joys. They were jeering us with the *songs of Sion*; and such a derision as this must be always painful. We could not manage our part in that work of gratitude, whilst *Sion, the city of our solemnities*, lay in rubbish. But now God has baffled them: our hopes cannot be their jest any longer. Their plots are unravelled, their threats are dissolved. Heaven has plunged them into contempt, and made them infamous. They are now past bantering our Religion, or making their scurrility palatable with our seriousness. We may now rejoice, and have none to make us afraid. We durst scarce tell them, that we had *a King in Sion*, whilst ourselves lay at their mercy: but divine sovereignty has at last appeared and we may well rejoice in that arm, which themselves cannot deny.

APPLICATION.

The mercies, that are united to the memory of *this day*, are such as represent the *great Keeper of Israel* in all his glory. We, in this nation, have seen an Arm greater than earth, and a Wisdom deeper than hell. God seems to have chosen *England*, as the stage, where he would act his wonders, and glorify his love. When the Devil and Sinners joined in one club, tempered their plots with so much cunning, and guarded them with a powerful interest; nothing below Almightiness could break the design, and quench their industry.

If

(*c*) Psal. cxvi. 1. (*d*) Psal. cxxx. 7.

If the Lord had not been on our ſide, may Iſrael now ſay, the waters had overwhelmed us, and the ſtream gone over our ſoul: but the ſnare is broken, and we are eſcaped. Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth (*e*).

When Religion lay gaſping, bruiſed with open perſecution, and undermined with hypocriſy; GOD ſtunned the violence that was public, and expoſed the miſchief that kept working under diſguiſe. Who could have thought, when there was ſo great a venture both of Goſpel and civil Liberty, that there ſhould be any room for *a* SAVIOUR *upon Mount Sion?* The gates of deliverance ſeemed to be locked up: a piteous zeal could have no likely paſſage to us; and yet, through all this defence and croud, GOD made room.

All thinking perſons cannot but know, how he *reſtrained our Rulers* for ſome time, and when that would not do, he kindly *changed them:* that if *the earth* would not *help the woman*, one of her own breed ſhould. We have indeed ſeveral things to diſ-tune our gladneſs: the reformation halts; mutual charity, the ſoul of our Religion, is ſtarving; conſciences harden; practical ſerioufneſs fails. But yet we ſhall wrong heaven, if we deny theſe extraordinary favours. GOD has hitherto helped us with a kind omnipotence; and now, *Let Iſrael rejoice in him that made him, let the children of Sion be joyful in their King.*

(*e*) Pſal. cxxiv. 8.

SERMON

SERMON III.

The great Value of a Seasonable Deliverance Considered and Applied.

Preached at NEWCASTLE, 1702.

DEUT. XXXII. 36.

The Lord shall judge his people, and repent himself for his servants, when he seeth that their power is gone, and there is none shut up or left.

THESE words are part of that song which *Moses* was to leave the children of *Israel* as a legacy to their succeeding ages. He had served them with courage and integrity all along: and now, at his death, he is thoughtful about them; and accordingly pens this divine composure, and charges them to be often repeating it. It was a project of GOD's own forming, as a preservative from that apostasy which they were already sliding into. They had dangerous symptoms upon them of idolatry and faction. The presence of this great ruler could scarce restrain them from a perverse carriage and a sullied Religion. *I know*, says he, *thy rebellion, and thy stiff neck; behold, whilst I am yet alive, ye have been rebellious against the Lord, how much more after my death? For I know, that after my death ye will utterly corrupt yourselves, and*

and turn aſide from the way which I have commanded you, and evil will befal you in the latter days, becauſe you will do evil in the ſight of the Lord, to provoke him to anger, through the work of your hands (*a*).

The ſong is well adorned with ſerious rhetoric, that it might at once give them both conviction and pleaſure. Here is work enough for conſcience to move about, and yet the affections do not want their proper charms of eloquence. His *doctrine dropped as the rain, and diſtilled as the dew, as the ſmall rain upon the tender herb, and the ſhowers upon the graſs* (*b*).

This ſong is a mixture of hiſtory and propheſy: a memorial of what had been, and a conjecture at their future carriage and diſpenſations; as they had always ſhewn an undutiful ſtiffneſs, ſo *Moſes* takes it for granted, that the old temper would revive after his death. They were breaking into parties under his government, and threatning to ruin the whole ſtate with confuſion. They often endeavoured to mix their worſhip with Heatheniſm, as if they would quarrel with God in their devotion: and it was but too poſſible, that this principle would break out with more violence, and leſs correction, when *Moſes* was removed.

But he gives them an awful aſſurance, that if they did practiſe their rebellions over again, they might expect a revival of former puniſhments. This would blaſt all their endeavours, diſpirit them in battle, and put gall into every providence. *How ſhould one chaſe a thouſand, and two put ten thouſand to flight, except their rock had ſold them, and the Lord had ſhut them up* (*c*)? God would not always endure their provocations, but ſhould at laſt ſeek the defence of his glory in their fall, if they did not promote it in a way of actual duty. Thus the words, that immediately forerun my text, repreſent him as ſpeaking out

(*a*) Deut. xxxi. 27, 29.
(*b*) Deut. xxxii. 2.
(*c*) Deut. xxxii. 30.

out his designs of wrath to a wicked people: *To me belongs vengeance and recompence, their foot shall slide in due time, for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste* (*d*). Though they were never so firm and secure in the possession of their privileges, yet heaven would give them a trip, and bring them down. With such dispensations as these would he *visit their iniquity*.

Now this verse lets us hear a change of notes, more calm and healing language. He supposes them almost wasted with the long corrections of Providence; and in this desolation, he breathes a reviving promise: *for the Lord shall judge*, &c. Where we may observe,

1. A signal glorious mercy: *The Lord shall judge his people, and repent himself for his servants.* It is laid down in two expressions, to intimate the fulness of the blessing, that it shall answer all their necessity and complaint.

1. *He shall judge his people:* He now supposes them to be hardly dealt with by the oppressor: in a lonely desolate condition, crushed with a barbarous arrogance. And indeed, it is no strain upon reason to imagine, that the enemies of the Church should break the laws of *justice*, as well as *charity*. An opposition of nature to all seriousness, is apt to make them over-do it. But God will right his servants, and own their cause, with a favourable appearance. He will not suffer imperious malice to sin both against equity and love. He has a constant over-sight of their carriage, and sometimes speaks as if he were suspicious of them. *Thus saith the Lord of hosts, I am jealous for Jerusalem, and for Sion, with a great jealousy; and I am very sore displeased with the Heathen that are at ease; for I was but a little displeased, and they helped forwards the affliction* (*e*). But the other branch of the promise springs a richer vein of comfort.

(*d*) Deut. xxxii. 35. (*e*) Zech. i. 14, 15.

2. *He will repent himſelf for his ſervants.* They might conſider, that he was their adverſary, and all the courage of nature muſt bend under this reflection. If ſinners perſecute them, they know it is ſo much pride, cruelty and injuſtice: but GOD never ſtrikes an unrighteous blow; all *his ways are judgment and truth* (*f*). Now, though the puniſhment was ſo deſerved, yet it ſhall be removed. He did them no wrong, when he vowed their calamity; but he will call in the reſolution again, and change the face of Providence towards them. *Since I ſpake againſt him, I do earneſtly remember him ſtill; therefore my bowels are troubled for him, I will ſurely have mercy on him, ſaith the Lord* (*g*). So that, here is juſtice for them againſt enemies; here is a relent and turn of heart in GOD. The adverſaries malice ſhall be avenged: the divine anger ſhall thaw down and run out in ſtreams of compaſſion. This is the promiſe that he makes, and ſtamps with heaven's own ſeal. When *he has bleſſed, no man can reverſe it* (*h*).

2. Here is the ſeaſon when he would make good his promiſe. *When he ſees that their power is gone, and there is none ſhut up or left.* His preſence is never more needful than in ſuch a ſcarcity of friends. He will thus time his favours, and publiſh them in the moment of danger. Here is a variety of words to expreſs the wild and frightful caſe that they might be brought into. I ſhall not amuſe you with the different interpretations that learned men have put upon this text: that is the way to loſe our time in an explication, and perhaps may rather give your thoughts an intanglement, than a diſcovery. This brief account you may take of the matter. Their helpleſs ſtate is ſet out in two particulars.

1. Their incapacity of ſelf-relief. *Their power is gone.* They are not in a condition to fence againſt the

(*f*) Deut. xxxii. 4.
(*g*) Jer. xxxi. 20.
(*h*) Numb. xxiii. 20.

the enemy. All their ability is wasted. Thus the complaint runs: *He has made me desolate and faint all the day. The yoke of my transgressions is bound by his hand; they are wreathed and come up upon my neck. He has made my strength to fall; the Lord has delivered me into their hand, from whom I am not able to rise up. The Lord has trodden under foot all my mighty men in the midst of me; he has called an assembly against me to crush my young men* (*i*).

2. Their despair of foreign assistance: *There is none shut up or left.* Not a friend to appear for them and espouse their sinking interest. *For these things I weep*, saith the Church, *mine eye, mine eye runs down with water, because the Comforter, that should relieve my soul, is far from me: my children are desolate, because the enemy prevailed: Sion hath spread forth her hands, and there is none to comfort her* (*k*). We cannot imagine a case more distressed and cloudy than the Church is here supposed to be in. But when it is *thus* with her, when she has neither power within, nor friends abroad; when her defence is gone, her outward alliance broke, then will *God judge his people, and repent himself of his servants.* The sense of the text is this:

The Church's greatest distress and danger is a fit time for God to shew himself in her deliverance: that is a proper season of mercy. A time of hazard and agony, is a time of love. *When he passes by, and sees them in blood*, then *he saith unto them, Live* (*l*). This might be made good from the records of the Church in all ages. He promises to save us after the manner of *Egypt*; and that was a mercy of this nature in all its steps.

When the *Israelite*'s bondage was most severe, then he sets up *Moses* on the stage of service (*m*): when *Pharaoh* was hardened by a long train of miracles, so that none could imagine there should be any reserve

(*i*) Lam. i. 13, 14, 15.
(*k*) Lam. i. 16, 17.
(*l*) Ezek. xvi. 8.
(*m*) Exod. iii. 7, 8.

of tenderness in him, then death drops an arrow into every family (*n*): upon this the people, who before endeavoured to keep possession, *thrust out* their captives (*o*). And when they would needs recover all, and fetch them back again with a mighty hand, the power and spirit of the nation is quenched in the *Red sea* (*p*). So that you see how Providence has acted by this rule already. And several years after it is said, that *the Lord saw the affliction of Israel, that it was very bitter; for there was not any shut up, nor any left, nor any helper for Israel:* and then the *Lord said, that he would not blot out the name of Israel from under heaven* (*q*).

The method shall be,

I. Briefly to shew, why God's interest is ever suffered to run so low, that his people shall want their power?

II. To represent the fitness of a providential appearance at such a time: or how peculiarly seasonable it is to visit them in this distress.

III. To make some application. And, lastly, To conclude with some remarks upon *this day*, and the mercy that we are called to remember in it.

I. Why does God ever let his interest be so much a sufferer, that it shall want both inward power and sufficient alliance? We might largely account for such an order and method of Providence; but you may be satisfied in these two answers.

1. Hereby he shews a just resentment of his people's folly and disobedience. There is in them *a spirit that lusts to envy* (*r*), which sometimes gets vent, and proclaims itself in actual rebellion. They have not parted with the infirmities and disorders of nature: they often shew

(*n*) Exod. xii. 29.
(*o*) Exod. xii. 33.
(*p*) Exod. xiv. 28.
(*q*) 2 Kings xiv. 26.
(*r*) Jam. iv. 5.

ſhew that their holineſs is mixed. Their contempt of GOD and mutual ſtrifes; their fellowſhip with thoſe of a wicked converſation and boldneſs in tampering with ſin: All theſe are lamentable arguments, that there is ſomething elſe beſides grace in their hearts. Now theſe out-breaks of corruption wound the name of GOD with a peculiar diſhonour.

Should this eſcape the cenſure of Providence, it would look as if he indulged their ſins. What a rant of blaſphemy might the enemies of Religion allow themſelves in? Or at leaſt it would give their atheiſm a ſecret pleaſure to obſerve GOD's indulgence of all this folly. To prevent ſuch odious reflections upon himſelf, he draws a cloud over his diſobedient children: he lets the world ſee, that though their perſons are favourites, yet this rudeneſs of nature is an abomination. *You only have I known of all the families of the earth, therefore you will I puniſh for your iniquities* (*s*).

For this cauſe he has crumbled Churches, looſed the bands of ſociety, becauſe they were not preſerved by a temper of love. *I will kill her children with death, and all the Churches ſhall know, that I am the Lord, which ſearcheth the reins and the heart, and I will give unto every one of you according to your works* (*t*). Upon ſuch a provocation he has waſted a people, and ſcorned a nation at once. When their fulneſs has ſoftened them into luxury and atheiſm, he has dried up the ſprings of relief, and born a dreadful teſtimony againſt their abominations. *The banquet of them that ſtretched themſelves ſhall be removed. The Lord God has ſworn by himſelf; ſaith the Lord God of hoſts, I abhor the excellency of Jacob, and hate his palaces; I will deliver up the city, with all the people that is therein* (*u*).

(*s*) Amos iii 2.
(*t*) Rev. ii. 23.
(*u*) Amos vi. 6, 7.

2. This way he purifies and reforms them. When Religion flows in a channel of peace, many fall in with it, who have no heart at all to GOD and his interest, but love the dalliance of prosperity. Whatever service these may do the Church by accident, yet it is certain, as their natures abhor it, so they are usually a distemper in it. *One sinner destroys much good* (*x*): their hypocrisy imbitters those that observe it against Religion: nay, whilst they lie unsuspected, they are a rot to the fellowship. They clog the work of the LORD by a cold profession. They are sometimes explained in scandalous crimes; but when they are most secret, yet then they lie as a dead weight upon the society. Thus it has been in all ages, and the trick yet continues. Persons will observe where the sky looks clearest: they love a Religion that is most pampering to their ambition and interest. *Many of the people of the land became Jews, for the fear of the Jews fell upon them* (*y*).

Now in a time of great trouble, the Church is scoured and gets fairly rid of this stench and corruption. They will not endure rubbing; a sifting Providence discovers them. Perhaps no Church-censures could remove them, but Providence wipes them off with honour enough to the society they fell from. Thus the Church is often melted down again, scummed of its dross, and made more amiable and solid. *Though they have lain among the pots, yet they shall be as the wings of a dove, covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold* (*z*). At such times does Religion unload, and cast the burden that it has long groaned under. *He that receives the seed into stony places, is he that hears the Word, and with joy receives it; yet he has not root in himself, but endures for a while; for when tribulation and persecution arises, because of the Word, by and by he is offended* (*a*).

II. Why

(*x*) Eccles. ix. 18.
(*y*) Esther viii. 17.
(*z*) Psal. lxviii. 13.
(*a*) Matt. xiii. 20, 21.

II. Why is a time of this diſtreſs and calamity ſo fit for GOD's appearing in his people's deliverance?

1. He may then very honourably ſave them in a way of juſtice to his enemies. Then *the Lord awakes, as one out of ſleep, and like a mighty man that ſhouts by reaſon of wine; he ſmites his enemies in the hinder parts, and puts them to perpetual reproach* (*b*). It is uſual in theſe black days, that blaſphemy opens its mouth; malice and cruelty ſhew themſelves upon every tongue. *All the enemies of Sion open their mouths againſt her, they hiſs and gnaſh their teeth; they ſay, We have ſwallowed her up; certainly this is the day we have looked for, we have found, we have ſeen it* (*c*). The perſons, who durſt not ſpeak their malice in proſperous times, are unchained from their reſervedneſs when Chriſtianity is under a cloud: that is *their hour, and the power of darkneſs* (*d*). They can eaſily trample the intereſt that is already proſtrate before them. Sinners have the cowardice of their maſter; as Satan was the fierceſt upon CHRIST *in the wilderneſs*, ſo the tools of his intereſt pour in upon the Church when ſhe is in the like ſolitude. The reins are taken off in a time of Sion's troubles: ſuch as flattered her before, or however behaved themſelves with a calmneſs, will now declare a more tempeſtuous enmity.

When ſo much of this rancour is ſtirring, it is time for GOD to appear: *Thus ſaith the Lord God, My people went down aforetime into Egypt, to ſojourn there, and the Aſſyrian oppreſſed them without cauſe: Now what have I here, that my people is taken away for nought? They that rule over them, make them to howl, and my name continually every day is blaſphemed* (*e*). He ſuffers by every reflection, and more eſpecially in the actual cruelties of wickedneſs. Perſecution cuts into CHRIST himſelf,

(*b*) Pſal. lxxviii 65, 66.
(*c*) Lam. ii. 16.
(*d*) Luke xxii. 53.
(*e*) Iſai. lii. 4, 5.

himſelf, *crucifies him afreſh, and puts him to open ſhame* (*f*). Now when Religion is ſunk ſo low, by the preſſure of enemies, it is but juſtice to throw off the load. At that time it may be preſumed that the ſinner has *filled up his meaſure* of guilt, and is ripe for ſlaughter. Therefore *the Lord ſhall go forth as a mighty man, he ſhall ſtir up his jealouſy like a man of war: he ſhall cry, yea, rore; he ſhall prevail againſt his enemies. I have a long time holden my peace; I have been ſtill, and refrained myſelf: now will I cry like a travailing woman, I will deſtroy and devour at once* (*g*). He will give *a reward to the proud.* If he was no more than the Governor of the world, and ſtood in no particular relation to his people; yet he would ſtir up himſelf to the repairs of that honour which enemies violate: *Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompence tribulation to thoſe that trouble us* (*h*).

2. A deliverance ſo timed will bring all the glory to himſelf. *The earth mourns and languiſhes; Lebanon is aſhamed, and hewn down; Sharon is like a wilderneſs; Baſhan and Carmel ſhake off their fruits; Now will I ariſe, ſaith the Lord; now will I be exalted, now will I lift up myſelf* (*i*). He has ſometimes expreſſed a caution, leſt his people ſhould rob him of any rightful honour. He knows how apt Self is to be creeping into GOD's throne, and catching at his ſhare of reputation. To prevent this, he makes a double reform in *Gideon*'s army. He thinks it dangerous to proſper a multitude, leſt he ſhould loſe his part amongſt them. *The people that are with thee, are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands, leſt Iſrael vaunt themſelves againſt me, ſaying, Mine own hand has ſaved me* (*k*). The perſon that either dives into himſelf, or obſerves the greedineſs of pride

(*f*) Heb. vi. 6.
(*g*) Iſai. xlii. 13, 14.
(*h*) 2 Theſſ. i. 6.
(*i*) Iſai. xxxiii. 9, 10.
(*k*) Judg. vii. 2.

pride in the world, will ſee the need of ſuch a caution. As it is dangerous to run away with GOD's honour, ſo it is a ſin that we cannot eaſily guard againſt. Conceit and ſelf-applauſe is the freeſt breath of nature.

Now when the Church is in her afflicting ſolitude, abandoned to an helpleſs unpromiſing condition; Deliverance then will proclaim its Author. At ſuch a time GOD writes his name upon the mercy in great letters, for the common peruſal and wonder of his people. *They got not the land in poſſeſſion by their own ſword, neither did their own arm ſave them; but thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance, becauſe thou hadſt a favour unto them* (*l*). Thus he puts a ſtop to the creature's claim, and gathers up all the glory of the action to himſelf. Such a Providence is the work of pure divinity: it is above human reach, and pulls the ſerious heart upwards in ſongs of gratitude. *Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy and thy truth's ſake* (*m*).

3. His appearing ſo ſeaſonably will continue the impreſſion of the mercy upon his peoples minds. It is thus with particular ſouls. *Abraham* rears a monument to the honour of GOD, and names it after the Providence that he would remember by it: *Jehovah-jireh, in the mount of the Lord will be ſeen* (*n*); ſo does *David, I was brought low, and he helped me* (*o*). *Hezekiah* is another inſtance to this purpoſe: *The Lord was ready to ſave me, therefore will we ſing my ſongs all the days of our life, in the houſe of the Lord* (*p*.) And thus will the whole Church do: They will not be ſo apt to forget the deliverance which caught them up in the moment of ruin. When they were in a daily expectation of miſery, and ſaw what trains of deſtruction were laid for them, the face of ſalvation then is like

(*l*) Pſal. xliv. 3.
(*m*) Pſal. cxv. 1.
(*n*) Gen. xxii. 14.
(*o*) Pſal. cxvi. 6.
(*p*) Iſai. xxxviii. 20.

like the sun's rising at midnight; it is too strange not to sink into the memory.

God lets his people tremble upon the lips of a gulph that would swallow them; and when the ground begins to give way with them, he pulls them back by an arm of love. And is not this enough to perpetuate the mercy, and make it so inseparable, as if it were rather a part of the mind, than a guest lodged in it?

4. It will determine and encourage their hope in his goodness for the time to come. When Deliverance cuts a glorious way through so many hazards, it lets us see what a God can do: so that upon the return of the like difficulties, we may freely trust in One who is so well acquainted with the methods of salvation. *Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord; awake, as in the ancient days, in the generations of old; art not thou it that hast cut Rahab, and wounded the dragon* (*q*)*?* As this is a good argument in prayer, so it may serve as a prop to our faith, when it bends under heavy discouragements.

It is easy to argue from past experience to future mercy: there is a connection between old kindnesses, and those we are now begging for, because they are the work of the same God. As he got such an ample victory over our calamities once, so a capacity of saving us again is still laid up in his omnipotence. These tastes of his power and love will put more sweetness into the promise, and activity into our hope. It shall both swell the breast, and teach the mouth to draw it. *Thou shalt bring them,* saith *Moses, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, in the place, O Lord, which thou hast made for thee to dwell in; in the sanctuary, O Lord, which thine hands have established; the Lord shall reign for ever and ever* (*r*). How can he tell all this? He gives *gives a reason of the hope that was in him* in the next words; *For the horses of Pharaoh went down, with his chariots and horsemen, into the sea, and*

(*q*) Isai li. 9. (*r*) Exod. xv. 17, 18, 19.

and the Lord brought again the waters of the ſea upon them, but the children of Iſrael went on dry land in the midſt of the ſea (*s*).

5. Deliverance is very ſeaſonable in times of greateſt danger, becauſe it uſually comes upon the exerciſe of ſuch grace as is moſt honourable to GOD. He puniſheth us for his glory; and he lets his hand lie heavy upon us, till the very removal of it ſhall add a brightneſs to his name. *When the Lord has performed his whole work upon mount Sion and Jeruſalem, then he will puniſh the fruit of the ſtout heart of the King of Aſſyria, and the glory of his high looks* (*t*). Humanly ſpeaking, he would have been a loſer had the ſalvation made more haſte, and given an earlier interruption to the ſcourge that his people lay under. In this caſe, the cordial had come before the ill humours were cleared off. But when they are ſunk ſo low, they are commonly in a fit temper to receive the mercy. Becauſe,

Firſt, Their humility qualifies them for the deliverance. It was not meet to reſtore the proſperity, which pampered their ambition till they had parted with the abuſive temper. They muſt *enter into the rock, and hide themſelves in the duſt, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his Majeſty* (*u*). But when their ſpirits are upon a juſt level, as low and declining as their condition, then its not ſo dangerous to truſt them with the mercy. *Awake, awake, put on thy ſtrength, O Sion, put on thy beautiful garments, O Jeruſalem, thou holy city; for there ſhall no more come into thee the uncircumciſed and the unclean, ſhake thyſelf from the duſt, ariſe and ſit down, O Jeruſalem! Looſe thyſelf from the bands of thy necks, O captive daughter of Sion* (*x*). GOD brings them by his grace to value his meaneſt appearances, to love Religion in its ruins. Thus he takes off that wantonneſs of temper which provoked him in the day of their ſolemn feaſts. He gives

(*s*) Exod. xv. 20.
(*t*) Iſai. x. 12.
(*u*) Iſai. ii. 10.
(*x*) Iſai. lii. 10.

gives them an appetite to the crumbs that fall from his table. And how honourable is his conqueſt over all their pride and lightneſs? Is not that deliverance well-timed that finds them in tears for ſin, melted down under the rebukes of a Father, and embracing the wounds of Chriſtianity? *The time to favour Sion, the ſet time is come, when God's ſervants take pleaſure in her ſtones, and favour the duſt thereof* (*y*).

Secondly, They receive deliverance at ſuch times upon the wings of prayer, ſo that he appears to be a GOD who *hears the cry of the humble*, and this is one of his darling characters: *Many times did he deliver the Iſraelites, but they provoked him with their counſels, and* then *were brought low for their iniquity: nevertheleſs he regarded their affliction, when he heard their cry* (*z*). Diſtreſs has ſent them often to the throne of grace, to beg the dawn of that ſalvation that GOD has promiſed. *Turn us unto thee, O Lord, and we ſhall be turned, renew our days as of old* (*a*). It may be, they ſeldom minded the common intereſt of Religion, when there was no apparent hazard of it: they carried it ſlightly enough, and with a continual trifle of ſpirit, till the ſcourge made them feel. *There is none calls upon thy name, none ſtirs up himſelf to take hold of thee* (*b*). But when they came to find a reproach and vexation upon the name of CHRIST, when GOD *hid his face from them, and conſumed them, becauſe of their iniquities*, it has taught them the way to their knees. *But now, O Lord, thou art our Father, we are the clay, and thou art the potter, we are all the work of thine hand. Be not wroth very ſore, O Lord, neither remember iniquity for ever; behold, ſee, we beſeech thee, we are all thy people* (*c*).

Thirdly, Salvation, at ſuch times, comes after an eminent trial and conqueſt of faith. When faith tells

us

(*y*) Pſal. cii. 13, 14.
(*z*) Pſal. cvi. 43, 44.
(*a*) Lam. v. 21.
(*b*) Iſai. lxiv. 7.
(*c*) Iſai. lxiv. 8, 9.

us of the mercy, it looks at two attributes in the divine nature, Power and Goodness, though it has principally to do with the former. It lays down this as a certain rule, that *God is able to save us:* and it strives to be assured that he actually *will do it.* Indeed, our distress may be so great, as to give us a suspicion of the latter; but perhaps in the darkest moment of unbelief upon that head, we may have unusual convictions of Omnipotence. *Our God, whom we serve,* say the three Worthies, *is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace; and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O King: but if not* (*d*), if he not actually save us, yet we believe his power, and will not worship another GOD. Now this puts a credit upon his name, when we can trust him in defiance of all danger and objection. *Abraham* considered not his own, nor *Sarah*'s age; *he staggered not at the promise, through* any *unbelief* of this kind, *but was strong in faith, and* hereby *gave glory to God* (*e*).

APPLICATION.

1. See what secure guards GOD's people are under. When stripped of all created help they may run to a confederate Omnipotence. *Their Redeemer is strong, the Lord of hosts is his name* (*f*).

2. Let us carry it with an ingenuous caution to this great and perpetual friend, that when others leave us, we may be sure of an Almighty reserve. *I, even I, am he that comforteth you; Who art thou then, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and the son of man, that shall be made as grass, and forgettest the Lord thy maker* (*g*)?

3. In the time of Sion's troubles, see your relief: flee to him with confidence; hang about his throne, and let no unbelief beat you from it. If Deliverance take but slow steps, yet still act faith in the promise, and

(*d*) Dan. iii. 17, 18.
(*e*) Rom. iv. 19, 20.
(*f*) Prov. xxiii. 11.
(*g*) Isai. li. 12, 13.

and keep yourselves quiet with these two considerations.

First, That you have deserved a longer bondage: should he draw out the thread of your captivity, yet he is righteous. *All this is come upon us for our great trespass, and our evil deeds; thou, our God, hast punished less than our iniquities deserve* (*h*).

Secondly, Rather believe that you are unfit for the mercy, than that GOD is unwilling to give it. Suspect your own disorders, and keep up a venerable opinion of his love. This is both safe and dutiful. It will preserve your spirits cool and temperate: you will never study any revenge upon heaven, but believe yourselves still under a course of providential medicine, and will be desirous, that *patience should have its perfect work* (*i*).

Thus I have done opening and applying this doctrine. We have a most remarkable proof of it in those providences that are recorded upon *this day*, to the memory of after-generations.

It is now fourteen years since GOD blessed us with a kind of Revolution in *England*. Our case before answered the most dismal characters of this text: *Our power was gone, nor was there* scarce any *shut up or left*, to appear for Religion and Liberty: these the enemy had damned to ruin. We may apply *Deborah*'s words to that troublesome state: *They chose new gods, then was there war in the gates; yet there durst not be a shield or a spear seen among forty thousand in Israel* (*k*). Those brave and gallant spirits, who ventured to oppose an exalted tyranny, were, many of them, cut off. The cause, which they wanted strength to defend, they sealed with their blood; and conquered in martyrdom, when they could not do it in battle. And though they lived to see themselves disappointed, yet they died in the belief of what we have found. Their

(*h*) Ezra ix. 13.
(*i*) Jam. i. 4.
(*k*) Judg. v. 8.

Their laſt breath was ſomething like *Joſeph*'s: *God will ſurely viſit you, and bring you up from hence* (*l*).

You may remember how the channels of equity were choked up with arbitrary power. The confuſion that begun *Iſrael*'s captivity, was the forerunner of our deliverance. *In thoſe times there was no peace to him that went out, nor to him that came in, but great vexations were upon all the inhabitants of the country* (*m*). The Religion we now profeſs caſt but a dim light, and was almoſt extinguiſhed. But in this deſperate moment, GOD appeared to *judge his ſervants, that the man of the earth might oppreſs them no more* (*n*).

He put a freſh reputation upon *this day*, by the arrival of his late Majeſty King WILLIAM; a perſon richly formed to all the duties of government, and whoſe name is embalmed with *Mordecai*'s character; *He was great among the Jews, accepted of the multitude of his brethren, ſeeking the wealth of his people, and ſpeaking peace to all his ſeed* (*o*). The bleſſings we enjoyed in his reign, were ſo many intimations, that a peculiar ſway of heaven directed him all along. He had a ſoul both for the camp and the palace. His battles retrieved our honour and grandeur, and his councils maintained them. It was a ſignal mercy that he had life enough to make the nation ready for a war, and the throne ſecure to a Proteſtant Queen. We owe the bleſſing of this government to GOD's preſence with the laſt. The ſame hand that raiſed up our firſt Deliverer, has continued his own work in her preſent Majeſty, who has given the moſt gracious aſſurance, that *the ſame war* ſhall be maintained abroad, and *the ſame peace* at home. *The ſpirit of Moſes reſted upon Joſhua* (*p*); the perſon of the ruler was only changed: and ſo it is in *England*, though King WILLIAM is dead, we have a living Copy of him

(*l*) Gen. l. 25.
(*m*) 2 Chron. xv. 5.
(*n*) Pſal. x. 18.
(*o*) Eſther x. 3.
(*p*) Deut. xxxiv. 9.

him upon the throne. The same GOD that *taught his hands to war*, has blest the *same cause* under another Sovereign. Her armies have shrunk the common enemy of *Europe*, to that degree, that we hope, he only lives for *Sisera*'s fate, *to fall by the hands of a woman.* Let this text be our consolation in a time of danger, and the voice of our gratitude when salvation comes.

The Lord judges his people, and repents himself for his servants, when he sees that their power is gone, and there is none shut up or left.

SERMON

SERMON IV.

The Reputation that a great Deliverance has in future Memory.

Preached at WAPPING, 1703.

NUMB. XXIII. 23.

Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, nor divination against Israel; according to this time it shall be said of Jacob, and of Israel, What hath the Lord wrought?

THIS Book is part of the history of GOD's dealings with the Jews in their travels from *Egypt* to *Canaan*. It was a thing so remarkable, to be pulled out of bondage with miracles, and led through a wilderness with safety, that they are charged to keep an exact journal of their motions and experiences. *Moses wrote their goings out, according to their journies, by the commandment of the Lord* (*a*).

Here are three chapters that tell us what treatment they met with from the King of *Moab*. They had an especial caution *not to meddle with a foot of his land* (*b*), because he was the seed of righteous *Lot*. The LORD said unto *Moses*, *Distress not the Moabites*,

(*a*) Numb. xxxiii. 2. (*b*) Deut. ii. 5.

neither contend with them in battle; for I will not give thee their land for a poſſeſſion (*c*). Yet this man looks upon them as enemies. He is in all the terror of deſpair and jealouſy. *Moab ſaid unto the elders of Midian, Now ſhall this company lick up all that are round about us, as the ox licketh up the graſs of the field* (*d*). And his methods of relief are as wild as his fears. He had no hopes of cruſhing them in battle, but ſtrives to get hell on his ſide. He ſends to *Balaam* for a curſe upon this numerous people, and tempts him with all *the rewards of divination* (*e*); which the New Teſtament brands with another name, by calling them, *the wages of unrighteouſneſs* (*f*).

We find that God denies him leave at firſt to go upon this wretched errand: and afterwards, when he allows him to comply with *Balak*, yet he gives his thoughts and words ſuch a wonderful turn, that inſtead of ſinking the people, he raiſes them: he pronounces the ſucceſs which he was hired to blaſt. He runs quite contrary both to his own covetous and malicious bias, and alſo to the deſign that *Balak* had in ſending for him.

So that here we have a lofty account of *Iſrael*'s happineſs. We cannot ſuppoſe that a man, whoſe *ways were perverſe before the Lord* (*g*), ſpoke his own heart in all theſe beauties of eloquence and praiſe. No, he was over-ruled and commanded by a ſuperior Being. *The Lord put a word in Balaam's mouth, and he ſaid, Return unto Balak, and thus ſhalt thou ſpeak* (*h*). Thus he had told him at their firſt meeting. He had as much inclination to have damned them with a curſe, as he had afterwards to corrupt them with his more ſenſual arts. But he knew his malice was hampered, and therefore ſays, *Lo, I am come unto thee, have I now any power at all to ſay any thing? The word that*

(*c*) Deut. ii. 9.
(*d*) Deut. xxii. 4.
(*e*) Deut. xxii. 7.
(*f*) 2 Pet. ii. 15.
(*g*) Numb. xxii. 32.
(*h*) Numb. xxiii. 5.

that God puts into my mouth, that ſhall I ſpeak (*i*). And when the King was ſtartled at the bleſſing he pronounced, he gives the ſame reaſon, *Muſt I not take heed to ſpeak that which the Lord has put in my mouth* (*k*): So again, *I have received commandment to bleſs, and he has bleſſed, and I cannot reverſe it* (*l*). So that we may look upon all this parable as GOD's voice, a peculiar communication of his mind and will to this perſon. *Spake I not unto thy meſſengers, which thou ſenteſt unto me, ſaying, If Balak would give me his houſe-ful of ſilver and gold, I cannot go beyond the commandment of the Lord, to do either good or bad of my own mind; but what the Lord ſaith, that will I ſpeak* (*m*).

In the words we have *Iſrael*'s ſafety and glory.

1. Their ſafety. *There is no enchantment againſt Jacob, nor divination againſt Iſrael; i. e.* None ſhall attain their end. Every plot and attempt is blaſted. It is in vain to fetch the arts of ruin out of hell. The moſt accompliſhed intrigues of darkneſs cannot do their part upon a nation that is fenced about with Omnipotence.

2. Their glory or character. *According to this time,* &c. Here obſerve,

1. The general extent and ſurprize of the mercy. *It ſhall be ſaid.* It will be a thing of notorious view, expoſed to univerſal admiration.

2. The particular relation it had to them. *It ſhall be ſaid of Jacob and of Iſrael*; the people whom hell invades, and heaven defends.

3. The Author of it: his name is inſcribed upon it, *What has the Lord wrought?* They ſhall all look at him, when they are wondring at the Providence. Though enemies deny him, and others are apt to forget him, yet ſuch an act of greatneſs would make its way to their conſciences.

(*i*) Numb. xxii. 38.
(*k*) Numb. xxiii. 12.
(*l*) Numb. xxiii. 20.
(*m*) Numb. xxiv. 12, 13.

4. The occaſion of it, and that is ſome particular deliverance: *According to this time*, &c. Perhaps he has reſpect to the whole train of mercies that reached from *Egypt* to *Canaan*. This was a thing of long and honourable memory; it was often ſaid of them, *What has the Lord wrought* (*n*)? This entred into his character, *The Lord liveth that brought up the children of Iſrael from Egypt* (*o*). But it may be *Balaam*'s remark does not take ſo large a circuit; he is only conſidering the particular favour which himſelf was the unwilling inſtrument of; and *from that time* it might be ſaid, What has GOD done for his people? Now, that he has given them ſuch an eminent reſcue from the deſigns of men and devils?

The ſenſe of the words may be expreſſed in this propoſition.

GOD's ſignal appearing for a people, is a ſurpriſing evidence of his power, and a continual honour upon them.

I. What ſort of an appearance is it that will bear this glorious character?
II. How is this ſo general and ſurpriſing an evidence of his power?
III. How does it put a continual honour upon the people whom he thus delivers?
IV. The Application.

I. We muſt conſider the Providence itſelf which the text gives us ſo magnificent an account of; and that is GOD's appearing with ſuch a largeneſs of mercy, as does not only proclaim himſelf, but fixes a laſting reputation upon his people. This I might anſwer in ſeveral particulars, but I will only inſtance in four caſes, all of which are viſible in *Iſrael*'s deliverance, which we are conſidering in this chapter; and the late Revolution in *England*, which we are called to remember *this day*.

1. GOD

(*n*) Jer. xvi. 15. (*o*) Jer. xxiii. 8.

1. God declares himſelf and honours his people, when he ſaves them againſt the moſt likely attempts of enemies. Here *Iſrael* was incloſed with a great number of envious monarchs, who grudged the ſucceſs of their arms, and ſtrained their inventions to ſwallow them up. We read of none that entred into a league with them, but a little handful afterwards. God had *hardned their hearts* (*p*). They acted with a froward zeal againſt this pilgrim nation. This is afterwards mentioned both for the honour of God's people, and to ſecure a reputation to himſelf; as a monument of their privileges and his greatneſs: *Becauſe he loved thy Fathers, he choſe their ſeed after them —to drive out nations from before thee greater and mightier than thou:—Know therefore this day, and conſider it in thy heart, that the Lord is God in heaven above, and in the earth beneath, there is none elſe* (*q*).

There was all the policy of nature to weave out the intrigue of deſtroying this people; and becauſe this was too little, they muſt have a ſcholar from below, to inſpire their councils. The court of *Moab* was not ſufficient, and therefore they ſent to *Balaam*; that what they could not do with courage, they might make out with charms. And you may obſerve, though they had no great comfort in their own projects, yet they ſet an high rate upon his curſe. *I wot that he whom thou bleſſeſt, is bleſſed; and he whom thou curſeſt, is curſed* (*r*). As if the ſcales of Providence were hung in hell: as if God had reſigned the government of the world to the vileſt rebel againſt his own throne. But this is the uſual giddineſs of the Church's enemies; when they have loſt their natural courage, they ſupply it with a whimſical faith in ſome wretched contrivance or other. There are *many devices in a man's heart, nevertheleſs the counſel of the Lord ſhall ſtand* (*s*). The God who had terrified *Balak*, could manage

(*p*) Joſh. xi. 20.
(*q*) Deut. iv. 37, 38.
(*r*) Deut. xxii. 26.
(*s*) Prov. xix. 21.

Balaam. The heart of the one ſinks and falls, and the tongue of the other is hurried into a rapture of bleſſing.

And thus it has been in *England*'s caſe. Our hiſtories tell us of a pompous fleet, that once came from *Spain*, with all the gallantry of that nation, on purpoſe to lay waſte our Religion and Liberties. And, that it might work a more expeditious ruin, they ſent to *Rome* for a bleſſing; that the *Balaam* of that place might ſtamp his name upon the undertaking, and inſure the ſucceſs: for they imagined, that *ſuch as he bleſſed, were bleſſed; and they that he curſed, were curſed.* Thus they came with more ſtatelineſs to enjoy the prey, than they had courage to ſecure it. This gave them immoderate expectations, becauſe a Churchgale blew them on. But GOD took this affront, and declared a loud reſentment in his providence: for the armado ſunk under the bleſſing it was ſo proud of. Now this is an eminent diſcovery of his greatneſs, and the peculiar indulgence that he followed us with. *The day of the Lord of hoſts ſhall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up, and he ſhall be brought low; and upon all the ſhips of Tarſhiſh, and upon all pleaſant pictures: And the loftineſs of man ſhall be bowed down, and the haughtineſs of men ſhall be made low, and the Lord alone ſhall be exalted in that day* (*t*).

2. When he works after an extraordinary manner, without the help of his people. Perhaps he uſes them as he did his armies againſt *Siſera*, though *the militia of heaven* did the main execution (*u*). *God brought them out of Egypt, he has as it were the ſtrength of an unicorn* (*x*). And this particular deliverance was of the ſame kind. His ſaving them from *Moab*, was after the manner of *Egypt*. He changes *Pharaoh*'s heart from ſtoutneſs into trembling, from unwillingneſs

(*t*) Iſai. ii. 12, 14, 16, 17.
(*u*) Judg. v. 20.
(*x*) Judg. v. 22.

neſs into a compliance; and now he ſets *Balaam*'s tongue to a quite different purpoſe than it was deſigned. It could be no act of theirs, that fetched a bleſſing from thoſe lips, which were hired for a curſe. Here GOD wrought alone: he is ſeen in the affair throughout.

Their victory was very glorious over the *Amorites*, whom they ſcattered in battle: but now they are only to ſtand ſtill. As the enemy had truſted all their cauſe with an helliſh agent, ſo GOD would anſwer them in a more immediate battle. With theſe mixtures did they go triumphant into *Canaan: they are ſaved by wonders, by war, by a mighty hand, and a ſtretched-out arm* (*y*). Sometimes they muſt undergo the toil and hazard of war, to teach them their own duty; and at other times, they are only the ſpectators of a fighting Providence, that they might know *whoſe hand it was that drove out the heathen. They got not the land in poſſeſſion by their own ſword, neither did their own arm ſave them; but thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance, becauſe thou hadſt a favour unto them* (*z*). In this Scripture we read both the author of their ſalvation, *God's right hand*; and the motive, *the favour that he had to them.* Thus *he* is ſeen, and *they* are owned in the ſame Providence.

Had they been engaged in a doubtful war, yet the ſucceſs muſt have come from him: but now he does the whole; both gives them the victory, and actually completes it without them. This was *Iſrael*'s caſe ſeveral generations after, in a new quarrel with *Moab*. In good *Jehoſhaphat*'s days they were in danger from this enemy, and could have no other proſpect, but of deſolation and ruin. Their condition was ſo hopeleſs, that their only recourſe is to a friend in heaven; and he ſaved them after this wonderful manner that I am ſpeaking of. *Be not afraid*, ſays the Prophet, *neither be diſmayed by reaſon of this great*

(*y*) Deut. iv. 34. (*z*) Pſal. xliv. 3.

multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's; you shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves; stand you still, and see the salvation of the Lord with you, O Judah and Jerusalem: fear not, nor be dismayed, to-morrow go out against them, for the Lord is with you (*b*).

And how often has he thus expressed himself to his Church in *these nations?* when there has been none to help, his own arm has brought salvation. *All they that devour thee shall be devoured, and all thine adversaries, every one of them shall go into captivity; and they that spoil thee shall be a spoil; and all that prey upon thee will I give for a prey. For I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds, saith the Lord, because they called thee an out-cast, saying, This is Sion, whom no man seeketh after* (*b*).

3. When it is all clear gains without any loss or damage to his people. Had *Israel* fought the *Moabites*, though they might have come off with honour and victory, yet it is not to be supposed but some of them would have fallen in the battle; so that whilst the generality of the people were glorying in their mercy, some desolate families might be mourning over their dead. The public interest was promoted, but their relations were cut off; others rejoice at their cost: but here is no occasion for this mixture in their gladness; the conquest is cheap and intire to them.

And, my friends, the great Revolution which begun this day in *England*, was thus inhanced. God delivered us without any expence of blood and slaughter. The Person that came to save us, may wear the character that God gives to *Cyrus*. *I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways; he shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives, not for price nor reward, saith the Lord of hosts* (*c*). Had we come by our mercies with the waste of several armies, the most usual way of prevailing, then we should

(*a*) 2 Chron xx. 16, 17.
(*b*) Jer xxx. 16, 17.
(*c*) Isai. xlv. 13.

ſhould have thought the gains glorious: but we have the deliverance in all its ſweetneſs, without the charge of thoſe troubles that once lay in the way to it.

And it is the more remarkable, that a government begun with murder and policy, and maintained with cruel revenges, ſhould be overturned without a drop of blood. As the errand upon which the *late inſtrument* of our ſafety came was peaceful, ſo there was nothing deſtructive in the methods that he took. Providence gave this continual teſtimony to his glorious deſign; that as he came to reſcue the people, he ſhould do it without any damage to them. We may well cry out with the awakened church, *When the Lord turned again our captivity, we were like them that dreamed* (*d*). Senſe out-did faith; we ſaw what we had ſcarce the power to believe; victory without a battle, a general tumult and no war. The great preparations of the enemy, nouriſhed the cauſe that they were to ſtrangle. *Was not this the doing of the Lord? was it not* once *marvellous in our eyes?*

4. When it is a *comprehending mercy*; including many deliverances, and reaching a vaſt length. Of this ſort was *Iſrael*'s conqueſt over *Moab*. This ruffle of their plots, was a double reſcue, they were at once ſaved from earth and hell, men and devils.

Sometimes God ſeems to neglect his intereſt for a ſeaſon; he does not ſcatter his favours in drops as he uſed to do, here a little and there a little: but when he appears, they may ſee that his love has neither been idle nor unkind. He has taken the whole bundle of mercies which they have been waiting for, and wrapped them up in one great deliverance; ſo that as ſoon as *Sion travailed ſhe brought forth* (*e*). It was not a tedious lingring Salvation. God

(*d*) Pſalm cxxvi. 1. (*e*) Iſa. lxvi. 7.

God *cut the work ſhort in righteouſneſs* (*f*); and theſe are glorious evidences of his power and love.

This miſcarriage of *Balaam*'s malice, was enough to diſhearten all attempts of the like nature: Hell would be ſtruck into deſpair when ſo great an agent talks in a ſtrain as if he had been a refugee from darkneſs, a proſelyte to *Iſrael*; ſo that he ſpeaks the common language of a diſtreſſed world, who cannot bring about their deſigns of wickedneſs: *Surely there is no enchantment againſt Jacob, and divination againſt Iſrael.* There is no aſſaulting them that way: All the engines of ſpiritual wickedneſs are not able to cut through the *pillar of fire*; the burning guard that goes along with *Iſrael.* There is more than *Balak*'s diſappointment in it, for this is equivalent to a victory over all the ſorceries of *Canaan.*

And then beſides, it was a favour of *long memory*, and like to have an influence upon their future lot. Had *Balaam* ſucceeded in his arts, they might have expected enough of thoſe engagements from other nations. The *Canaanites* would have plundered hell of its armory, rather than loſe their country. But this diſappointment in the firſt venture, broke all their deſigns that way. Of this nature was their deliverance at the *Red-Sea. The people ſhall hear and be afraid, ſorrow ſhall take hold of the inhabitants of Paleſtina* (*g*).

Such a mercy was our Revolution: (as it is ſaid of *Rebecca*) there were *nations in its womb* (*h*). It brought us a revival of the Proteſtant intereſt, that was almoſt driven out with *new gods, whom our fathers knew not* (*i*). It gave us a ſecurity to our lives and liberties; it reſtored that fence that we have of both, the laws of our nation, which had been ſhattered with a proſperous tyranny: nay, it brought dominion

(*f*) Romans ix. 28.
(*g*) Exod. xv. 14.
(*h*) Gen. xxv. 2, 3.
(*i*) Judges v. 8.

dominion to *England*, which was before but the tool of one country, and growing the jeſt of others.

We were too much like *Iſrael*; though *Balaam* could not reach them with a curſe, yet he found another way to bring a plague among them; and that was by the *midianitiſh woman* (*k*). *Cozbi* was his moſt effectual charm. This made the people degenerate, and ingaged heaven's anger againſt them. With the ſame abomination was *England* allured into bondage. The corruption was getting ground, making its way over law, ſobriety, juſtice, and every thing that is ſacred, *pertaining to life and godlineſs*. We might bewail the degeneracy in thoſe words, *How does the city ſit ſolitary that was full of people? How is ſhe become as a widow? She that was great among the nations, and princeſs among the provinces, How is ſhe become tributary* (*l*)*?* Thus was *England* at the Revolution. And from this unhappineſs, ſhe advanced to be the ſcourge of a common tyrant, the defence of abuſed and threatned ſtates, and the ſupreme moderator of *Europe*.

I could enlarge with pleaſure enough, upon a theme where God and Mercy are writ in great letters; but I will only mention one thing more, which gave the completing ſtroke to our other privileges: And that is, the ſame Revolution which begun this day, gave us not only the reign of a King, who had an equal largeneſs and inclination to ſecure a peace in his own dominions, and be glorious in an uſeful war abroad: but it has given us a happy and promiſing Succeſſion, ſo that our liberties are not buried with the Great Prince that reſtored them; but they are continued, and graciouſly defended by our preſent Sovereign, whoſe government ſtands upon the ſame foot, and who is (bleſſed be God) a proſperous agent in thoſe great affairs, whch his late Majeſty begun with

(*k*) Numbers xxv. | (*l*) Lam. i. 1.

with ſo much vigour; and beſides, the crown is intailed upon an illuſtrious Proteſtant family. So that you ſee, if we were to unbowel the deliverance, we ſhould find it contains all the national privileges we are now poſſeſt of, and the whole ſecurity we have in view. And may it not be ſaid according to this time, of *England*, *Scotland* and *Ireland*, What has the LORD wrought? This was the firſt link of that glorious chain; that which begun the mercies we enjoy, gave the crown its preſent ſettlement, and the kingdom all its expectation of a continuing happineſs.

II. How is this a ſurpriſing evidence of GOD's power? What I have already ſaid, would furniſh out an anſwer to this queſtion. The oppoſition that he cut his way through; the pure unaſſiſted divinity that appeared in the whole; the ſafety of his people, and the vaſt croud of favours that lay in the general bulk of our deliverance; theſe are proof enough of his greatneſs and conduct in the Providence; ſo that having enlarged upon theſe things before, I might diſmiſs them with a tranſient reference; I will only here take notice, that at ſuch times, he uſually conveys an impreſſion upon the general part of mankind; ſo that it is almoſt the univerſal cry, *This is the finger of* GOD.

1. It is ſurpriſing to his own people; ſuch as are moſt converſant with all the ſweetneſs of the Providence: To be ſure they will be looking through ſenſe, and above nature: This diſpenſation will be a glaſs, not to hide their father, but to ſhow him in his glory. This remark do the *Iſraelites* put upon the time of their deliverance out of *Egypt*. *It is a night much to be obſerved unto the Lord, for bringing them out of the land of Egypt; this is that night of the Lord, to be obſerved of all the children of Iſrael in their generations* (*m*).

In

(*m*) Exodus xiv. 42.

In their afflictions they considered his hand, and mourned under it. Their addresses for relief were presented to his throne; and now they take this deliverance as an answer to all the arguments and intreaties which they have prayed out. Their faith and hope were creeping upon the ground, rather feeding upon dust than promises: unbelief lodged a cloud in their minds, and a burden in their obedience: And now, when GOD splits the darkness, and makes his own way through it, they must ascribe all to him. It is a reasonable debt to his love, and the genuine effect of theirs. *I will not trust in my sword, neither shall my sword save me; but thou hast saved us from our enemies, and put them to shame that hated us: in God we boast all the day long, and praise thy name for ever* (*n*).

2. It is wonderful to strangers, those that have no personal interest, either in the vengeance or the mercy of this dispensation. *The labour of Egypt, the merchandize of Ethiopia, and of the Sabeans, men of stature shall come over unto thee, and they shall be thine; they shall come after thee, in chains shall they come over: they shall fall down unto thee, and make supplication to thee, saying, Surely God is in thee, and there is none else, there is no God* (*o*). They cannot but observe how wonderfully a people are caught from ruin, who lay trembling upon the very lips of the pit. And though the conviction may not be religious in these persons, though it is no more than a startle of nature, yet there is a glory redounds to GOD from it. Thus *Jethro* beholds the exploits of heaven for *Israel*, with a sweet surprize. *Now I know that the Lord is greater than all gods, for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly, he was above them* (*p*). And in another national deliverance, the gazing kingdoms took their part in admiration. *They said among the heathen, The Lord has done great things for them* (*q*).

It

(*n*) Psalm xliv. 6, 7, 8.
(*o*) Isa. xlv. 14.
(*p*) Exodus xviii. 11.
(*q*) Psalm cxxvi. 2.

It is surprising to enemies, the creatures whose plots are disordered and blasted. They cannot but be sensible that a favourable presence goes along with such persons; and sometimes the conviction is so powerful as to squeeze a wish out of them, *Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my latter end be like his* (*r*). Indeed it is not with any pleasure that they see God in this triumph, much less have they a pious resentment of it: But *the wrath of* these *men shall praise him* (*s*). He gets a glory by their vexation and despondency. *The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance: he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked. So that a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous; verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth* (*t*).

III. What honour doth this put upon his people?

1. It distinguishes them from the rest of the world: *I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee: since thou wast precious in my sight thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee; therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life* (*u*). He sweeps over other nations, and drops his mercy here. He is doing that for them which the neighbouring countries can only look at, but not taste. *From the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him; for the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations* (*x*). The same does *Moses* take notice of; *Did ever a people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and live? Or hath God assayed to go and take him a nation from the midst of another nation, by temptations, signs, and wonders, by war, and a mighty hand, and a stretched out arm, and by great terrors? — Unto thee it was shewed* (*y*).

Indeed

(*r*) Numb. xxiii. 10.
(*s*) Psalm lxxvi. 10.
(*t*) Psalm lviii. 10, 11.
(*u*) Isa. xliii. 3, 4.
(*x*) Numb. xliii. 9.
(*y*) Deut. iv. 33, 34.

Indeed these peculiar vouchsafements do not always proclaim a singular worth in the people that receive them: for, if this had been requisite, *England* must have perished for want of a title to the deliverance. *Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord God, be it known unto you: be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel* (z). But it shews his especial goodness to such a nation, when they are in this happy case, rolling in fulness, their liberties guarded by Providence, their arms successful, whilst others want both the bread of this life, and that which feeds a better. He does not so resent their folly as to cast them off. *He has not beheld iniquity in Jacob, nor seen perverseness in Israel; the Lord his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them* (a). I may repeat the Psalmist's words, and apply them to our land, and more especially this year, wherein God has blest us with a peculiar harvest. *Our garners are full, affording all manner of store; our sheep bring forth thousands and ten thousands in our streets: our oxen are strong to labour; there is no breaking in nor going out, no complaining in our streets. Happy is that people which is in such a case; yea, happy is that people whose God is the Lord* (b).

2. It is an assurance of further kindness. We are allowed to plead that long thread of mercies we have already received, and to desire it may be drawn out yet further. It gives *the ransomed of the Lord* (c) a peculiar greatness of mind and courage. It is heartening enough against all the fierceness of hell, to consider that we are got into so strong an alliance. *The people shall rise as a great lion, and lift up himself as a young lion; he shall not lie down until he eat of the prey, and drink of the blood of the slain* (d).

APPLI-

(z) Ezek. xxxvi. 32.
(a) Numb. xxiii. 21.
(b) Psalm cxliv. 13, 14, 15.
(c) Psalm cvii. 2.
(d) Numb. xxiii. 24.

APPLICATION.

Let not us forget either this deliverance, or the God that appeared so full in it. Let this enter into *England*'s character, that heaven has blest us with such a Revolution. *According to this time may it be said of* us, *What has the Lord wrought?* You know this is the day which God pitched on to give us his late Majesty King William: And hereby he equally retrieved the liberty of the people, and the glory of the crown, which were both lost in tyranny and darkness. Indeed this noble work at first was struck at with a vain opposition, and afterwards submitted to with an ungenerous regret. *It grieved them exceedingly, that a man was come to seek the welfare of the children of Israel* (*e*). But the design made its own way, and swept off resistance with such a dispatch, as if it had run on *celestial wheels*. Such as now gall the undertaking with censure and reproach, were then as clumsey at banter, as they were at fighting. Though their malice was not cured, yet it was dazzled by those beams of divinity that blazed out of the Providence. *When all our enemies heard thereof, and the heathen that were about us saw these things, they were much cast down in their own eyes, for they perceived that this work was wrought of God* (*f*).

And though the impression is much wore off, yet God still continues to glorify the Revolution, by raising up another Sovereign on that bottom, and making her the life of a just confederacy, against that monarch who begun to sink in a former reign, and perhaps may tumble in this. As we are to own God in gratitude for what is past, so we must do it with prayer for what we yet expect. I will conclude with the prophet's words, applied to this great Providence, *Who raised up the righteous man from the East*

(*e*) Neh. ii. 10. (*f*) Neh. vi. 16.

East, called him to his foot, gave the nations before him, and made him rule over kings? He gave them as the dust to his sword, and as driven stubble to his bow. He pursued them and passed safely, even by the way that he had not gone with his feet. Who has wrought it, and done it, calling the generations from the beginning? I the Lord the first, and with the last, I am he (g). This has the Lord wrought.

(g) Isa. xli. 2, 3, 4.

SERMON V.

TO THE

READER.

THIS Sermon was designed for no other sense than the ear, and no further a spread than among a single congregation; and therefore it is easy to observe, with how little guard either of accuracy or language it comes out. As my own hurry in making it ready for the press allowed me only time to transcribe it, so indeed I durst not be at any new pains to prepare it for the public taste, lest it should appear more like a gaudy jest, than a memorial, or an improvement of the late storm. I am sure, the tempest, which occasioned this discourse, blew no softness of rhetoric, but a plain indignation. That long roar of wind, *November* 25, 26, and 27, 1703, which tumbled down houses upon their inhabitants, and lodged the ships, with their unhappy contents, in the gaping ocean, this is too solemn for an airy flaunt of words.

It was therefore my chief study, as Providence is only the Bible repeated in action, to give a scriptural account of GOD's Sovereignty, and of our carriage under such a discovery of it: I have found, in my little experience, that inspired words have sunk with the most penetration and empire within the hearts of men: when GOD speaks Judgments, he refers us to

the lively Oracles: the doctrines, threatnings and promiſes there, are level into all his diſpenſations in the world; they tell us as much of his Majeſty as we can ever ſee in Providence: the latter is but a vindication of the former; it is GOD's reply to the challenge of unbelief and preſumption: he then lets mankind feel that he will be ſteady to his word. That we may take both theſe together, has been my endeavour in the following diſcourſe.

It was ſome ground of encouragement on the Faſt-day, to find moſt congregations in this city and the adjacent parts, not only crouded, but with ſuch perſons as declared a good ſenſe of their buſineſs there. And perhaps one thing that both filled and regulated our aſſemblies, was, that other Storm that we were apprehenſive of, in the moment of worſhip. GOD ſeemed to be repeating the former quarrel, though not in the ſame degree of loudneſs, and extent of ruin; as if he would catch our departing ſerioufneſs back again, and reſtore ſomething of that awe that we felt in the great Tempeſt.

But it is equally certain and deplorable, that theſe impreſſions ſoon wore off. The people, that could not but tremble at the ſound of this judgment, have profanely mocked it ſince. It is diſmal to think that ſo ſweeping a calamity as this, ſhould ever become the entertainment of the ſtage. That men ſhould act the mimic ſo far, as to make ruin a diverſion, by dreſſing it up with atheiſm and foppery. The banter of this ungodlineſs is ſo extreme, that the Right Reverend the Lord Biſhop of *Oxford*, thought fit to arraign it that day in a Sermon before the Houſe of Peers: there is a vein of ſweet and ſerious eloquence runs through the whole diſcourſe, but upon this ſubject his lordſhip diſcovers ſo much of a chriſtian warmth, that I ſhall tranſcribe the paſſage, and cover my own inſignificant regret with this venerable authority. "To ſhow how far we have exceeded the impieties of

" of the *Jews*, permit me to mention one inſtance, " though I cannot do it without horror, of a late " daring affront to GOD, unparalleled by the *Jewiſh* " or any civilized nation, which looks like a defying, " if not a ridiculing, of his Judgments; I mean " that impudent repreſentation of a mock Tempeſt " on the ſtage, ſo ſoon after we had felt that dread- " ful one, that gives occaſion to our meeting this day. " I think I ſhould not have been juſt to my ſubject, " if I had omitted to take notice of this unprece- " dented piece of profaneneſs; and certainly it " will be no digreſſion from it, to add, that whilſt " theſe nurſeries of lewdneſs are ſuffered to corrupt " the age, it is in vain to hope to ſee it reformed." Page 17.

If there were more of this noble ſpirit among thoſe whom Providence has raiſed above the common level, it would either make ſuch as profeſs one LORD drop their little varieties, or continue them without any violation of harmony and peace. I will only add, that if this zeal was kindled where it is now wanting, enlarged where it has begun to live, and ſucceſsful in every attempt and flame that it breaks out in, it would be an hopeful ſecurity to the nation's preſent happineſs, and a good ſign that Glory ſhall yet dwell in our Land.

That the various Sermons which are printed upon this occaſion, may ſtir up a courage againſt the wickedneſs that makes GOD our enemy, is the hearty deſire of

T. BRADBURY.

WAPPING,
Feb. 21, 1703-4.

SERMON THE FIFTH.

GOD'S Empire over the Wind, &c.

Preached on the FAST-DAY, *January* the 19th, 1703-4.

PROVERBS XXX. 4.

— *Who hath gathered the Wind in his Fists?*

The whole verse is thus;

Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? Who hath gathered the Wind in his fists? Who hath bound the Waters in a garment? Who hath established all the ends of the earth? What is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou canst tell?

THIS chapter is a collection of instructive sentences, ascribed to *Agur the son of Jakeh* (*a*), and they are added to *Solomon*'s Proverbs as being much of the same contexture with them. Though we have no further account of this person in Scripture, yet there is sufficient ground to believe that he was a man of peculiar reputation for wisdom; one that stood highly advanced in the esteem of the world, and it is also very natural to suppose, that *Ithiel* and *Ucal* were either his scholars, or his intimates, that expected great advantages by his converse: they apply

(*a*) Prov. xxx. 1.

themſelves to him as a walking Oracle; ſo that we may, without any ſtrain, imagine, that this chapter is an anſwer to their importunity.

He begins his diſcourſe with words that expreſs both a decent modeſty, and an awful ſurprize. He at once confeſſeth his own narrowneſs of thought, and alſo adores that myſterious head of knowledge which he entered upon.

He tells them, that, as for himſelf, they had over-rated him; his accompliſhments were no way parallel to their expectations; inſtead of having any peculiar degree of wiſdom, he will not take with a common ſhare. *Surely I am more brutiſh than any man, and have not the underſtanding of a man. I neither learned wiſdom, nor have I the knowledge of the holy* (*b*). And indeed, thus it uſually is, ſuch as have treaſured up any intellectual riches, know the ſcantineſs of their own attainments; whilſt, on the other hand, perſons who are ſtrangers to any ſolid learning, do oftentimes make the greateſt pretence and flouriſh. Where the waters are deep, they generally run ſmooth and ſilent, but when they are ſhallow, they proclaim themſelves with a rumbling noiſe. This good man ſunk lower under all his diſcoveries: he found himſelf ignorant of much more than he could pretend to an acquaintance with; ſo that as he fills with light, he has a more humbling view of his own darkneſs. This is the front of his diſcourſe; he blames that exceſs of character, which his friends had given him.

But afterwards he throws a ſlight upon all the human race. Perſons of the greateſt figure in learning, who have the richeſt hoards of experience, and the beſt penetration of mind, loſe themſelves in their contemplations of GOD. They are but blundering in the dark, when they pretend to ſtudy his infinite nature and ſurpriſing works.

Who

(*b*) Prov xxx. 2, 3.

Who has ascended up into heaven? and who has descended? This intimates, that it is impossible there should be any full knowledge of these things but what is first learned above, and then declared upon earth by a messenger from that world of light. This character, that he speaks of, agrees only with JESUS CHRIST the great prophet of the church: *John* the Baptist gathers up this glorious title for a mediator: *No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten son, which is in the bosom of the father, he hath declared him* (*c*). And afterwards in another place, *He that cometh from above is above all: He that is of the earth, is earthy, and speaketh of the earth: He that cometh from heaven is above all. And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth: He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God* (*d*).

After this he mentions some things, which must be ascribed to no other than GOD, and which none can have a comprehensive knowledge of. *Who has gathered the Wind in his Fists? Who has bound the Waters?* &c. The meaning of this question may be twofold.

1. Who but GOD has done these things? Who can lay a plausible claim to such divine performances? To this purpose agree the Psalmist's words, *Among the gods, O Lord, there is none like unto thee; neither are there any works like thy works: for thou art great, and dost wondrous things: thou art God alone* (*e*). Or,

2. Who can throughly understand this? He does not only speak of it as a truth, but a mystery. It claims faith, and it is above comprehension.

The last words seem to express a *Messiah*'s interest in these things; *What is his name, and what is his son's name?* He was concerned in rearing the fabric of this world: *Without him was not any thing made that was made* (*f*). He has also a share in propping the great

(*c*) John i. 18.
(*d*) John iii. 31, 32, 34.
(*e*) Psalm lxxxvi. 8, 10.
(*f*) John i. 3.

great bulk of the creation. *By him all things consist* (*g*). He challengeth this glory to himself, as a party in the vast performance. *When he*, that is the Father, *prepared the heavens, I was there; when he set a compass upon the face of the depth: When he established the clouds above, when he strengthened the fountains of the deep: When he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment: When he appointed the foundations of the earth: Then was I by him* (*h*).

And as to the Winds, we know they were made subject to him in his lowest abasement. When he appeared only in the form of a servant, he shewed himself the Lord of nature. This way he surprised his company. At his command *the wind ceased, and they were sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wondred* (*i*). Another Evangelist gives us an higher account of this impression, and tells us what they observed convinced them of his deity. *They worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God* (*k*). We read also of another instance of his authority over the Winds, that out of the mouth of two witnessing miracles the thing might be established. We may first observe their distress; *There arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship* (*l*). After this we are told of their wondrous deliverance. *He arose and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still: and the wind ceased, and there was a great calm* (*m*). And the history is concluded with the remark they pass upon this performance. *They feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him* (*n*)?

These other works are ascribed to him. *He has bound the waters in a garment:* The clouds are those vast

(*g*) Col i. 17.
(*h*) Prov. viii. 27—30.
(*i*) Mark vi. 51.
(*k*) Matt. xiv. 33.
(*l*) Mark iv. 37.
(*m*) Mark iv. 39.
(*n*) Mark iv. 41.

vaſt extended ſheets, which he has wrapped them up in. *He has eſtabliſhed the ends of the earth.* This world is fixed by his authority, and though it is *hung upon nothing* (*o*), yet he maintains it with his own arm.

But I ſhall confine my thoughts to that clauſe which I firſt read to you, which you may take the ſum of in this Propoſition.

The whole ſtock of wind is in God's hand.

Here I ſhall briefly ſhew you,

I. What we are to underſtand by this phraſe.
II. What uſe we are to make of this truth.

1. *The wind's being gathered into his fiſts*, ſhews us his power over it. That it is no more than the inſtrument of his ſovereign pleaſure. He gives it all its breath, and diſpoſeth of it to the ſervice of his will. It is the vaſſal of his authority: this is three times aſſerted in the ſame words, *When he utters his voice, there is a multitude of waters in the heavens, and he cauſeth the vapours to aſcend from the ends of the earth, he maketh lightnings with rain, and bringeth forth the wind out of his treaſuries* (*p*).

Though Satan is ſometimes called *the prince of the power of the air* (*q*). We are not to ſuppoſe, that he has got the ſupremacy of the wind. Whatever leave he may have, upon ſome occaſions, to affright and diſturb this lower world, yet the government is in a greater hand. *For lo, he that formeth the mountains, and createth the wind, and declareth unto man what is his thought, that maketh the morning darkneſs, and treadeth upon the high places of the earth, the Lord, the God of Hoſts is his name* (*r*). We ſcarce read that ever the devil had a larger ſcope to his

(*o*) Job xxvi. 7.
(*p*) Pſalm cxxxv. 7. Jer. x. 13. and li. 16.
(*q*) Eph. ii. 2.
(*r*) Amos iv. 13.

his malice, than againſt *Job*'s family: he begins his miſchief with an army of the *Sabeans* (*s*). After this he burns up the ſervants and cattle with *lightning* (*t*). Then he plies the remainder with *three bands of the Caldeans* (*u*). And his laſt havock is of the children by *a wind from the wilderneſs* (*x*), which ſhattered the houſe, and deſtroyed the perſons: but all this was owing to a commiſſion from above; *The Lord ſaid unto Satan, Behold, all that he has is in thy power, only upon himſelf put not forth thy hand* (*y*).

It is GOD that rules the whole armory of nature: whatever can be dreadful lies under his management; he has not quitted his own right of diſpoſal. The creation received a Being from him, and muſt pay a complete deference to his will. It is he that troubles the air, and ſpreads an univerſal faintneſs through the the world. The ſeamen ſee *the work of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep: For he commandeth, and raiſeth the ſtormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof* (*z*).

2. The wind's being *gathered into his fiſt*, intimates, that this power belongs to him alone. No creature hath a breath of wind to diſpoſe of, it is all collected into the divine hand. This GOD takes to himſelf as his own prerogative. *He has his way in the whirlwind, and in the ſtorm, and the clouds are the duſt of his feet* (*a*). And it is *a way that the vultur's eye ſees not*. None can trace his footſteps, or pretend to imitate him. Sometimes the Almighty pleads againſt idolaters from the ordinary courſes of nature, that lie under his rule. The prophets challenge, banter, and reproach the heathen gods. *Are there any among the vanities of the Gentiles, that can cauſe rain? Art not thou he, O Lord our God* (*b*)?

When

(*s*) Job i. 15.
(*t*) Job i. 16.
(*u*) Job i. 17.
(*x*) Job i. 19.
(*y*) Job i. 12.
(*z*) Pſalm cvii. 24, 25.
(*a*) Nah. i. 3.
(*b*) Jer. xiv. 22.

When he is displeased, nature groans under the weight of a single frown. There is an universal distress that the creation feels: this he threatens, *I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place in the wrath of the Lord of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger* (*c*). This is all his own appointment: whatever calamity befals us, it is in obedience to his supreme order; *snow and vapour, and stormy wind fulfil his word.*

Mankind are very apt to swell, when they imagine themselves possest of any singular capacities; but they are sometimes put to the blush by considering their inability to perform the least acts of Providence; they *cannot make one hair white or black*; or *by taking thought add one cubit unto their statures.* Much less are they capable of turning the great wheels of government.

Good *Jehoshaphat* entred into a league with the King of *Israel*; and, to make this alliance more stately and pompous, they build a fleet: this was to strike an awe upon the adjacent countries; but they could neither fix their endeavours under a blessing, nor guard them against a curse. A judgment from GOD blunders all their schemes and imaginations. Thus the Prophet told the King, *Because thou hast joined thyself with Ahaziah, the Lord hath broken thy works; and the ships were broken, that they were not able to go to Tarshish* (*d*).

What great havock has he made of kingdoms and rulers? He has taken those into his own hand who loved to be the general plagues of mankind. All their terror and preparations for war, are no resistance to his sovereignty. Crowns and sceptres are tossed like the ball of Providence: the nations and princes, that once showed the fullest upon earth, are sunk with an hasty ruin: he takes away *the man that made the earth to tremble, and shook kingdoms* (*e*). And the country, where

(*c*) Isai. xiii. 13.
(*d*) 2 Chron. xx. 37.
(*e*) Isai. xiv. 16.

where he ruled and gathered up materials for tyranny, is *swept with the besom of destruction* (*f*).

3. *The wind is gathered into God's hand*, that it may have a secure abode there. *In measure when he shooteth it forth, he debates with it; and stays his rough wind in the day of his east-wind* (*g*). If any other had the disposal of it, there would be a continual havock of nature: he alone can check its violence: it will allow of no bridle but his command; it is above all other control. *The four angels* were his servants, who *stood on the four corners of the earth, holding the wind, that it should not blow on the earth, nor the sea, nor any tree* (*h*).

And it is well for us, that the sway of this judgment is in GOD. I have let you see, under a former head, what dreadful ravage Satan makes, if he has but a commission to indulge his malice; he would shew no more pity to the world, than he did to *Job*'s family. Should enemies have the disposal of storms and national miseries, what sad confusions would they bring upon the earth? But here is our comfort, this is heaven's own artillery: these are judgments wherein mankind have no interest; they are not so much as the tools of GOD's supremacy in this case.

4. *The wind is* said to be *gathered into his fist*, to shew us how *easily* he can let *it out*: it is but opening his hand, and the tempest flies upon its master's errand: his commission is fulfilled with all the dispatch and integrity of nature. *He scatters his bright cloud, and it is turned round about by his counsels, that he may do whatsoever he commandeth upon the face of the world in the earth. He causeth it to come, whether for correction, or for his land, or for mercy* (*i*). Whatever the design be, it is easily accomplished; he is always in readiness to deal with an obstinate world; he hath a stock of terrors at command. And if the sons of men will

(*f*) Isai. xiv. 23.
(*g*) Isai. xxvii. 8.
(*h*) Rev. vii. 1.
(*i*) Job xxxvii. 11—13.

will go on to harden themſelves, they ſhall feel the miſtake of all their vain thoughts. He can with as much eaſe deſtroy us as terrify us; it calls for no more expence and fatigue of power: we are as ſoon cruſhed as reproved. It is the ſame thing with GOD, to let out all his wrath at once, as to give us a weaker taſte of it: he has greater reſerves than ſinners are willing to imagine; he does not put his whole ſtrength into one blaſt of wind; but can raiſe a more expeditious tempeſt, and let us feel the terror of thoſe words, *In my jealouſy, and in the fire of my wrath have I ſpoken; ſurely there ſhall be a great ſhaking in the land of Iſrael: So that the fiſhes of the ſea, and the fowls of the heaven, and all creeping things that creep upon the earth, and all the men that are upon the face of the earth, ſhall ſhake at my preſence; and the mountains ſhall be thrown down, and the ſteep places ſhall fall, and every wall ſhall fall to the ground* (*k*).

The reaſon why a provoking wretch, or a ſinful nation are ſpared, is not becauſe juſtice is unfurniſhed for execution; but *God is willing to make his power known, and therefore endures with much long-ſuffering, the veſſels of wrath fitted to deſtruction* (*l*). He will glorify his patience in forbearing them a while, and then they ſhall be *viſited with thunder, and earthquake, and great noiſe, with ſtorm and tempeſt, and the flame of devouring fire* (*m*). How eaſy a matter is it for him to blow an hurricane in a moment? He can at once put nature into a ruffle.

The *Aſſyrians* ſpread a formidable ſiege before *Jeruſalem*; there was number enough to pave their own way to victory; but you ſee what ſhort work GOD makes with them. It is little more than an hour's toil to ſweep them out of this life, and make them only an army of carcaſes; *That night the angel of the Lord*

(*k*) Ezek. xxxviii. 19, 20.
(*l*) Rom. ix. 22.
(*m*) Iſai. xxix. 6.

Lord went out, and ſmote an hundred fourſcore and five thouſand, and in the morning they were all dead corps (*n*). And the ſame may he do with his wind: he has a tempeſt within call, which he may, at any time, unlooſe upon a ſtubborn people: thus he informed *Job* of his power, when *He anſwered him out of the whirlwind* (*o*). *Haſt thou entred into the treaſures of the ſnow? or haſt thou ſeen the treaſures of the hail, which I have reſerved againſt the time of trouble, againſt the day of battle and war* (*p*)?

Thus I have conſidered the import of this phraſe; but I principally deſign the Application.

And this I ſhall do three ways:

I. Shew what general uſe we are to make of this truth.

II. How the conſideration of GOD's rule over the winds ſhould influence us, when we are humbling ourſelves before him.

III. What comforts true believers may gather from ſuch a text and providence as this.

[1.] For the general improvement, we may take theſe four heads of advice: *If the wind is in God's hand,*

1. Let us learn to adore his power, which is wonderfully expreſſed this way: bow before him; *ſerve him acceptably with reverence and godly fear* (*q*). He will be acknowledged in all his peculiar ſteps of government: he is adorning his own name, fixing a greater reputation upon it in a time of public judgment; *he cauſeth his glorious voice to be heard*, and ſhews *the lighting down of his arm, with the indignation of his anger, with ſcattering and tempeſt, and hail-ſtones* (*r*). This uſe does *Agur* make of it: he is filled with

(*n*) 2 Kings xix. 35.
(*o*) Job xxxviii. 1.
(*p*) Job xxxviii. 22, 23.
(*q*) Heb. xii. 28.
(*r*) Iſai. xxx. 30.

with a religious dread of that Majesty, which inscribes itself upon these providences.

This is the end why GOD declares an unusual greatness to the whole race of mankind at once, that they may cease to abuse his glory by their vain thoughts of him, and the open contempt of their practice. If we refuse to tremble before him; if we study more impenitency, he may load us with a terror that has no mercy at all in it. When sinners scorn to humble themselves, his indignation shall do it for them: one brush of his arm shall separate them from the vanities that they trust in. *The day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up, and he shall be brought low;—And upon all the ships of Tarshish;—And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his Majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth* (*s*). Therefore it highly concerns us to break the approaching storm, by *seeking the Lord whilst he may be found, and calling upon him whilst he is near* (*t*).

If we do not this way improve the stroke, it is lost upon us, and we may fear there is worse in reserve. We have all of us found, that there is a Power superior to our own, that the wind is under an higher management than we can give it: and what is this for? Why should GOD step out of his way, but to bring us into ours? Let us henceforth preserve a dutiful veneration for him upon our spirits. *I know*, says the Psalmist, *that the Lord is great, and that our Lord is above all gods; he bringeth the wind out of his treasures* (*u*). We see he is terrible, when he does but fight us with outward afflictions, how dreadful then is that wrath, which is pointed at the conscience? *These are* no more than *part of his ways*, it is but *a*

(*s*) Isai. ii. 12, 16, 19.
(*t*) Isai. lv. 6.
(*u*) Psal. cxxxv. 5, 7.

little portion that we know of him? The thunder of his power who can understand (*x*)?

2. We may learn to rest satisfied in his will, knowing, that if the wind be under his command, it is wisely disposed of. The Scripture represents him as considering the case of a nation, and measuring the judgments that he sends against them. *He looketh to the ends of the earth, and seeth under the whole heaven, to make a weight for the winds, he weigheth the waters by measure; when he made a decree for the rain, and a way for the lightning and the thunder, then did he see and declare it, he prepared it, yea searched it out* (*y*). I am not only pressing you to silence under this dispensation, because we cannot help it; but as it is *the work of him who is excellent in counsel* (*z*). He never took a false or imprudent step in the kingdom of Providence. Though things have but a cloudy face at present, and perhaps there is not much appearance of wisdom in them, yet we may conclude that GOD orders them all aright.

We read of *darkness* being *under his feet* (*a*). The work itself that he goes about, and all his advances in it are hid from the sons of men: there is a cloud between our eyes and him; but still wisdom has the sovereignty in all these affairs. Though his power admits of no control in the ordinary stream of Providence, yet this we are assured of, that every dispensation is the birth of a wise model. *The balancing of the clouds* is called *the wondrous work of him who is perfect in knowledge; the wind's passing and cleansing them*, is brought in as an argument, that *with God is terrible Majesty:* but yet he concludes, *touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out: he is excellent in power, and in judgment, and in plenty of justice; he will not afflict* (*b*), *i. e.* not without valuable cause.

3. See

(*x*) Job xxvi. 14.
(*y*) Job xxviii. 24—27.
(*z*) Isai. xxviii. 29.
(*a*) Psal. xviii. 9.
(*b*) Job xxxvii. 16, 21—23.

3. See how dreadful a thing it is to diſpleaſe him, who is ſo well provided of methods for our puniſhment. It is uſually the fulneſs of earthly delights that makes us ſecure and unthoughtful of GOD: but we have lately felt what a diſpatch his anger can work, when he deſigns to narrow our ſubſtance, when *he rents it with a ſtormy wind in his fury* (*c*). That which has been the gains of long hazard and toil may be gone in a moment. This was threatned againſt *Ephraim*, that *though he be fruitful among his brethren, a wind of the Lord ſhall come up from the wilderneſs, and his ſpring ſhall become dry, and his fountain be dried up: he ſhall ſpoil the treaſure of all pleaſant veſſels* (*d*).

If we take a look at ſinners through this text, we may ſee how ſtupid they are to engage ſuch a power againſt them: we have lately known the truth of that threatning, as if it had been deſigned for our days: *The rich man ſhall lie down, but he ſhall not be gathered; he openeth his eyes, and he is not: Terrors take hold on him as waters, a tempeſt ſteals him away in the night* (*e*). And does not this let us ſee the folly of a quarrel with GOD? We may pamper a vain mind with one idle imagination after another, but this only prepares us for a more diſmal ſurprize of ruin. There is ſcarce any thing that ſinners deſign with more pleaſure and arrogance, than the deſtruction of the godly: they would raze out all the prints of ſerioufneſs from this world: and every ſtruggle in this project is attended with as much aſſurance, as nature can either give or take: but their eyes are too low fixed; they only look at the perſons whom this malice is directed againſt. They do not conſider what a powerful alliance believers are brought into: ſo that when they puſh on their methods of iniquity, it is only to receive a baffle from Omnipotence: thus the promiſe runs to GOD's people; *Thou ſhalt fan them, and the wind ſhall carry them*

(*c*) Ezek. xiii. 13.
(*d*) Hoſ. xiii. 15.
(*e*) Job xxvii. 19, 20.

them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them; and thou shalt rejoice in the Lord, and glory in the holy One of Israel (*f*).

4. See to whom you must direct yourselves for the blessing of the winds. Many of this auditory do more especially know how serviceable they are to the greatest concerns of life: and you here learn who has the disposal of them. They are sometimes the chief instruments of your prosperity, and when their commission is altered, they can as easily destroy your fulness as promote it. Now as GOD must be acknowledged in all your ways, so it is highly becoming your profession to be often upon your knees, to maintain a correspondence with him, who is the great Insurer. He alone can breathe a blessing upon your attempts. The gales that must carry you on in every voyage, are laid up in the hollow of his hand, let it be your work to fetch them out by prayer. You may also see, who it is that has blessed and secured you; he has been *your refuge from the storm* (*g*).

[2.] We are to make such an improvement of this, as more especially suits with our design *this day*.

We are come to humble ourselves before the LORD for a late dreadful blow that he has given to these parts of the world. We may apply the Prophet's words to our case: *The fir-trees have been terribly shaken; the gates of the rivers opened, and the palace dissolved* (*h*). We have first, *the call of heaven* to the present duty; every blast sounds the exhortation: and this is echoed to from our earthly powers, who both confess the obligation and inforce it. By giving our presence here, we answer the commands of civil authority; but there is something more required, if we would come up to GOD's expectations. A bare attendance upon him in worshipping crouds is not enough.

(*f*) Isai. xli. 16.
(*g*) Isai. xxv. 4.
(*h*) Nah. ii. 3, 6.

enough. He complains of a people that were very exact in obſerving times of humiliation, but they did not look far enough. *When ye faſted and mourned in the fifth, and eleventh month, did ye faſt unto me, even unto me* (*i*) ? Now he ſeems to demand the following duties of us.

1. Let us humbly ſubmit to his work. It becomes us not to reply and clamour at Providence, but to look upwards with a ſilent devoutneſs, and conſider who has done it: One who never ſtood at the creatures bar; who *gives no account of his matters* (*k*). Whoſe diſpenſations are liable to no arreſt, and patient of no cenſure. Methinks there is a particular appearance of GOD in a wind, more than in many other public calamities. Conſumptions by fire ſhould lead us to him, but theſe are brought on by inſtruments. General diſtempers tell us of his hand, but here alſo he makes uſe of ſecond cauſes: but a tempeſt is a work that we can have no ſhare in, and this calls for ſubmiſſion. *David* chooſeth to have an affliction of GOD's beſtowing, *Let me fall into the hands of the Lord.* Though he was more capable of acting with a ruinous diſpatch than enemies could do, yet *there is mercy with him* (*l*). When *Job* underſtood that his children were ſwept off immediately by the hand of Providence, he ſubmits with a religious patience. The meſſenger told him, *There came a great wind from the wilderneſs, and ſmote the four corners of the houſe, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead. Then Job aroſe, and fell upon the ground, and worſhipped, and ſaid, The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; bleſſed be the name of the Lord* (*m*).

2. Let us look narrowly into ourſelves. In a time of public judgment every one is to *know the plague of his own heart.* How many of us may ſay with *Jonah*, *I know that for my ſake this great tempeſt is come upon you?*

(*i*) Zach. vii. 5.
(*k*) Job xxxiii. 13.
(*l*) 2 Sam. xxiv. 14.
(*m*) Job i. 19, 20.

you (*n*) ? We have contributed our part to the common miseries. We may this day denounce a *Wo to the crown of pride, and the drunkards of Ephraim, when the Lord with a destroying storm is casting down to the earth* (*o*). Though perhaps we do not run to the same excess of riot with a great many. Debauchery, lewdness and swearing may be crimes above our size. But are we not chargeable with abominations of another sort ? Our contempt of the divine ordinances, the ravage that we make of Christian love, the sloth and dulness of our zeal for GOD, these are things that have their cry for vengeance. But if we are hardned against a cure, and resolved that these follies should be our inseparable darlings, a more extensive and overflowing scourge may be prepared for us. There is nothing but fury and black dismay, for a people that hate to be reformed. Thus GOD complains, *Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots ? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil. Therefore will I scatter them as the stubble that passeth away by the wind of the wilderness. This is thy lot, the portion of thy measures from me, saith the Lord, because thou hast forgotten me, and trusted in falshood* (*p*). Sometimes the very face of a judgment tells us that the world is deeply charged with guilt : and of this sort was our late storm. *The earth is utterly broken down, clean dissolved, and moved exceedingly : The earth reels to and fro like a drunkard, and is removed like a cottage, for the transgression thereof is heavy upon it* (*q*).

3. Let this put us upon a speedy reformation. This the Psalmist begs, *Persecute them with thy tempest, and make them afraid with thy storm ; fill their faces with shame, that they may seek thy name, O Lord* (*r*). If any of you are stained with scandalous crimes,

(*n*) Jon. i. 12.
(*o*) Isai. xxviii. 1, 2.
(*p*) Jer. xiii. 23—25.
(*q*) Isai xxiv 19, 20.
(*r*) Psal. lxxxiii 15, 16.

crimes, take your laſt farewel of them; from this moment hold them at a diſtance. Do not dare to go on ſinking the nation ſtill lower in guilt and unhappineſs. Now that GOD has brought upon us, as he calls it by the Prophet, *A dry wind of the high places in the wilderneſs, not to fan nor to cleanſe, but a full wind*; his cry to us is the ſame with that to *Jeruſalem*; *O waſh thine heart from wickedneſs, that thou mayſt be ſaved: how long ſhall vain thoughts lodge within thee* (*s*)! And as for others, who think this is a charge that flies over them, let them examine what is amiſs, and begin an univerſal amendment.

There is one thing that I would more eſpecially recommend to you, as the leſſon of this Providence, and that is, a zeal for the REFORMATION OF MANNERS. That good work goes heavily on, through the cowardice and baſeneſs of ſome that pretend to wiſh well to it. It is a *national ſtroke* that we are now lamenting, and I know no greater piece of *national ſervice* that we are capable of. Our Fleet is the very picture of hell. They ſcarce breathe any thing but blaſphemy againſt GOD. We have dreadful taſtes of their vileneſs aſhore: you neglect the due methods that ſhould be made uſe of to reclaim them, and therefore GOD has taken the work into his own hands: ſuch as you would not rebuke, he has drowned. Let this warn us not to be ſo careleſs and remiſs in a ſervice of general importance. Labour to prevent ſuch another ſtroke. When the whole nation of *Iſrael* was infatuated with the ſpirit of idolatry, GOD tells his mind to *Elijah* in ſuch a chain of terrors, as perhaps was the model of his future dealings with that people. *The Lord paſſed by, and behold, a great and ſtrong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks, and after the wind an earthquake* (*t*). Let us endeavour to break this ſucceſſion of judgments.

(*s*) Jer. iv. 11, 14. (*t*) 1 Kings xix. 11.

4. Let us be earneſt with him for mercy and pardon. *O God, thou haſt caſt us off, thou haſt ſcattered us, thou haſt been diſpleaſed; O turn thyſelf to us again: Thou haſt made the earth to tremble; thou haſt broken it, heal the breaches thereof, for it ſhaketh* (*u*). That there are notorious abominations among us, is a thing that will ſooner bear a complaint than a denial. That GOD has declared his reſentment with a peculiar thunder, is alſo plain: is it not therefore our neceſſary duty to beg off his wrath, and ſolicit the return of that favour, which has been interrupted? And for your encouragement, conſider that ſometimes a public judgment goes before the moſt valuable mercies. GOD tells the *Jews, I will ſhake the heavens, the earth, the ſea, and all nations, and then the deſire of all nations ſhall come* (*x*). And CHRIST gives a promiſe of the ſame kind to his Diſciples: *There ſhall be ſigns in the ſun, and in the moon, and in the ſtars, and upon the earth diſtreſs of nations, with perplexity, the ſea and the waves roring: Mens hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after thoſe things, which are coming on the earth; for the powers of heaven ſhall be ſhaken. But when theſe things begin to come to paſs, then look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh* (*y*).

[3.] I ſhall conclude with an addreſs of peace to GOD's own people, in two particulars.

1. How great is your Friend? How able to deliver and protect you? This *David* remembers with adoration: *In my diſtreſs I called upon the Lord, and cried unto my God: The earth ſhook and trembled; he rode upon a cherub and did fly, he was ſeen upon the wings of the wind* (*z*). When the Prophet tells us that GOD *brings the wind out of his treaſuries*, he calls him, *the portion of Jacob, and Iſrael the rod of his inheritance.*

(*u*) Pſal. lx. 1, 2.
(*x*) Hag. ii. 6, 7.
(*y*) Luke xxi. 25, 26, 28.
(*z*) Pſal. xviii. 6, 7, 10.

tance (*a*). You are now toſſing in a reſtleſs tempeſtuous world; *the floods of ungodly men make you afraid:* but raiſe an eye to the Almightineſs that has undertaken your welfare. For though *the floods have lifted up their waves; yet the Lord on high is mightier than the noiſe of many waters, or the waves of the ſea* (*b*). With how much cruel pomp and thirſt did *Pharaoh* purſue the trembling flock of *Iſrael?* There was nothing to diſoblige his malice and ſtun his confidence, till GOD *blew with his wind, and covered him; he ſunk as lead in the mighty waters* (*c*).

2. How happy a thing is it to be intereſted in a covenant? Becauſe,

(1.) That either gives you a protection from theſe calamities, or a bleſſing with them. CHRIST is called *an hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempeſt* (*d*). Sometimes GOD ſteps in viſibly between his people and danger; according to that promiſe, *A thouſand ſhall fall at thy right hand, and ten thouſand at thy left, but the evil ſhall not come nigh thee* (*e*). Or if you do take a ſhare in the common diſtreſs, yet you are not equal ſufferers with others: they get no good by it, but it is a means of ſpiritual advantage to you. So that you need *not be afraid of evil tidings; your hearts are fixed, truſting in the Lord* (*f*).

(2.) You have other bleſſings that are not liable to theſe hazards. *The Lord will create upon every dwelling-place of mount Sion, and upon all her aſſemblies, a cloud and ſmoke by day, and the ſhining of a flaming fire by night; for upon all the glory ſhall be a defence: And there ſhall be a tabernacle for a ſhadow in the day time, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from ſtorm, and from rain* (*g*). No wind can blow away your inheritance. CHRIST has compared you to *an houſe built*

(*a*) Jer. x. 13, 16.
(*b*) Pſal. xciii. 3, 4.
(*c*) Exod. xv. 10.
(*d*) Iſai. xxxii. 2.
(*e*) Pſal. xci. 7.
(*f*) Pſal. cxii. 7.
(*g*) Iſai. iv. 5, 6.

built upon a rock, which fell not, though the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon it (*h*). It is said of the upright soul, that *he shall dwell on high; his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks; bread shall be given to him, and his waters shall be sure* (*i*). You hear that GOD has the disposal of storms, but he has a nearer hold of your portion. The winds are gathered into *his fist*, but your happiness is in *his heart*. *The Lord shall roar out of Sion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem, and the heaven and the earth shall shake; but the Lord will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel* (*k*).

(3.) You are going to a *place* where there shall be *no more* of these frights and confusions. The Apostle tells us, there must be *a removing of those things which may be shaken, as of those things that are made; that those things which* CANNOT BE SHAKEN *may remain. We have received a kingdom which cannot be moved* (*l*). You are born for a state of eternal calmness. The ruffle and distraction that this world is liable to, have no place in those glorious regions where your SAVIOUR lives. Therefore look within the vail, where there is nothing else but sedate purity and satisfying enjoyment. I will shut up all with the Psalmist's words, giving them a little variation, *Thou breakest the ships of Tarshish with a strong wind:* but this *we have heard, and this we shall see, in the city of our God, that God will establish it for ever* (*m*).

(*h*) Matt. vii. 24, 25.
(*i*) Isai. xxxiii. 16.
(*k*) Joel iii. 16.
(*l*) Heb. xii. 27, 28.
(*m*) Psal. xlviii. 7, 8.

SERMON

SERMON VI.

Public Revolutions the Work of God.

Preached at Stepney and Crosby-Square, 1704.

I Suppose, every one that knows this to be the fifth of *November* will easily call to mind, that it is the birth-day of several deliverances to this nation: And as *the way of the Lord is so* eminently *in the sanctuary*, so *they that are wise will observe these things* (*a*); and they lie in the way of a rich promise, that *they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord.* I shall therefore do as *Moses* did, when he saw the bush on a flame, and yet unwasted, *viz. turn aside* (from the subject of some late discourses) *and see this great thing* (*b*). The mercy we are chiefly to look at, is our glorious Revolution, wherein we had an amazing rescue from tyranny and darkness, by the arrival of his late Majesty King William, and the success of his wonderful arms. Now that we may see the greatness and lustre of a God in that affair, and take some instruction of duty from it, I would recommend to your attention what you find,

Daniel

(*a*) Psalm cvii. 43. (*b*) Exodus iii. 3.

Daniel II. 20, 21.

—— Bleſſed be the name of God for ever and ever; for wiſdom and might are his. He changeth the times and ſeaſons; he removeth kings, and ſetteth up kings.

THE hiſtory which theſe words are a part of, may be crowded into a little compaſs. The *Jews* being now captive in *Babylon*, ſome of them are choſen out to the preferments of the court. They muſt be *cunning in knowledge, and ſkilful in all wiſdom, and underſtanding ſcience, and ſuch as had ability in them to ſtand in the king's palace* (*c*). To theſe beauties of nature, they were to add the improvements of a nouriſhing education, and be brought up in all the learning of the *Chaldeans*. After this ſettlement, *Nebuchadnezzar* has the trouble both of finding a dream, and loſing it. He had forgot the thing, but it had left a terror behind: what the memory had diſcharged, the conſcience felt.

Upon this he calls his Magicians together, ſuch as pretended an intimacy with things out of the common view. He demands of them, *what the dream was*, as a trial of their ſkill about *the interpretation* (*d*). He imagined it was as eaſy to know theſe things, as to expound them. Their ignorance puts him into an extravagant fury, and he reſolves they ſhall all fall a ſacrifice to his humour (*e*). *Daniel* and his fellows, being reckoned of their company, were to take a ſhare in the common ruin. This makes him beg a little *reſpite* (*f*) from the king which he fills up with a confederate addreſs to the majeſty who could relieve them;

(*c*) Daniel i. 4.
(*d*) Daniel ii. 9.
(*e*) Daniel ii. 12, 13.
(*f*) Daniel ii. 15.

them; for *he went to his houſe, and made the thing known to his companions, that they would deſire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this ſecret, that Daniel and his fellows might not be ſlain with the wiſe men of Babylon* (*g*). This was to put a glory upon God's wiſdom and ſovereignty: here was the allegiance and courage of their faith. Their ſucceſs takes the next place in this hiſtory; *Then was the ſecret revealed unto Daniel in a night viſion* (*h*). And my text is the beginning of thoſe returns which his gratitude ſupplied. There are two things that urge this adoration.

1. The diſcovery of the dream, which prevented an expence of innocent blood. This he mentions with veneration and thanks. *He revealeth the deep and ſecret things: he knoweth what is in the darkneſs, and the light dwells with him. I thank thee, and praiſe thee, O thou God of my fathers, who haſt given me wiſdom and might, and haſt made known unto me now what we deſired of thee; for thou haſt now made known unto us the king's matter* (*i*). This was an extended mercy; but, beſides this, there ſeems to be another thing, which draws out his affection into praiſes; and that is,

2. The matter of the dream. It gave him a view of thoſe great changes and convulſions that were to happen in the world. That which affrighted *Nebuchadnezzar*, and made his reſolutions deſperate, has a more gracious influence upon *Daniel*. He is neither ſunk with an inward darkneſs, nor hurried to the ravages of cruelty. He praiſes God both for the diſcovery and the thing itſelf. *Bleſſed be the name*, &c. Here you may ſee,

Firſt, His tribute of praiſe; and that is, eternal adorations to the Majeſty of Heaven; *Bleſſed be his name for ever and ever.* The proſpect that God had given

(*g*) Daniel ii. 17, 18.
(*h*) Daniel ii. 19.
(*i*) Daniel ii. 22, 23.

given him reached to several ages. This dream represented a long roll of successions: and as they were all to be sustained by an infinite arm, so he would have them attended in all their motions with praise to the author. Nay, when the things themselves are run out, they might still be reviewed as the memorials of a divine perfection.

Secondly, Here is what he grounds it upon, and that is the glory of God's Nature and Providence. This is,

1. *Asserted. Wisdom and Might are his.* Wisdom to observe the most distant purposes, and Might to bring them out upon the stage of time.

2. *Proved.* By the actual dispensations which were figured out in the dream. *He changeth times and seasons; he removeth kings and setteth up kings.* He mentions those monuments of a divine authority, which are seen in the chief places of the earth. He tumbles down thrones, lays aside rulers with a disdain of Providence, tears the sceptre out of their hands, and advances others upon the rubbish of their greatness.

And we may be said to have much of *Daniel's* view. Such things as he admired, are what God has represented to us: only he saw them in the distance and shadows of a dream, and we in the actual rollings of Providence. The matter of his night-vision, is the apparent blessing of our day. He had a knowledge given him, but we have a more sensible revelation of the things themselves. We want nothing that he had, but that gracious temper of mind with which he improved all. We are upon higher ground with respect to advantage; let us be upon a level with him in obedience and zeal. And that this may be our study, I shall endeavour to sound the voice of such a Providence, and show you what we are to learn by it.

Doctrine.

Doctrine. The great Revolutions that GOD makes in the kingdoms of the world, ſhould ſtir up his people to bleſs and praiſe him.

The method ſhall be to ſhew,

I. How GOD manages theſe Revolutions in the kingdoms of the earth.
II. What praiſe is that which his people are obliged to upon this account.
III. Whence the obligation ariſes, or what there is in his removing kings and ſetting up kings, that calls for this revenue of honour.
IV. The Application.

I. What methods does GOD take to work theſe mighty changes in the world. I cannot pretend to follow Providence in all its latitude and variety. I will only mention three heads which lie open to the firſt and eaſieſt view.

1. He works theſe Revolutions by the death of kings. That the higheſt orders of men are akin to duſt and mortality, is a thing that neither bears a denial, nor needs an argument. They muſt in a little time have all their pride quenched in a grave, and change a gaudy retinue for worms and corruption. They may have names that are lacquered over with a falſe divinity; be called ſacred, high and mighty, invincible, and heap together abundance of ſwelling words; but ſtill death has as fair a blow at majeſty, and can as ſoon make it totter, as he has at the meaneſt beggar. They are called *Gods, and the children of the moſt High, but they ſhall die like men* (*k*). And this appears to be the LORD's work; if we conſider that the *keys of hell and death* (*l*) are hung at his girdle. The breath that ſwims through our noſtrils, can

(*k*) Pſalm lxxxii 6, 7. | (*l*) Rev. i. 18.

can have no current without his leave. He can presently stop up the channels of a royal life. Kings and princes are but his tenants. He has authority to dislodge them, being that *God in whose hands their breath is, and whose are all their ways* (*m*).

We read of some great men, *that their inward thought is, their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling-place to all generations* (*n*.) But as for themselves, they are sliding in the streams of time, and making haste to no other palace than the chambers of death, as the Psalmist tells us in the further course of his meditations. *Nevertheless, man being in honour, abideth not* (*o*). Whatever privileges they may boast of, that they are above control, yet they must surrender upon the demand of a superior King. When his messenger comes, there are no guards to resist him. He degrades all the fences of state, and hurries away his prisoner. *For no man has power over the spirit, to retain it in the day of death, and there is no discharge in that war* (*p*).

They may weave out the splendid schemes of ambition, and resolve to pursue them with all the greediness of nature. But it is all in vain, without the consent of Heaven. The finest contexture of policy unravels all at once, when God gives his negative voice. They are like a spider's web, brushed away with a single stroke of Providence. Therefore we are bid *not to put our trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help; for their breath goes forth, they return to their earth, and in that very day their thoughts perish* (*q*).

2. God removes princes, by giving them up into the hands of foreign enemies. They are not too high for the discipline of Heaven. Sometimes he has them upon their good behaviour; *If they be bound with fetters,*

(*m*) Dan. v. 23.
(*n*) Psalm xlix. 11.
(*o*) Psalm xlix. 12.
(*p*) Eccl. viii. 8.
(*q*) Psalm cxlvi. 3, 4.

fetters, and held in cords of affliction, then he ſhews them their work, and their tranſgreſſion that they have exceeded (*s*). He lets them ſee that they have ſtrained the law, and abuſed their authority. *He opens their ears to diſcipline, and commands that they return from iniquity* (*t*). *If they obey and ſerve him, they ſhall ſpend their days in proſperity, and their years in pleaſure* (*u*). *But if they obey not, they ſhall periſh by the ſword, and die without knowledge* (*x*). *Their life is among the unclean* (*y*). What wrecks and rubbiſh of governments do we find in hiſtory? How has a deluge of people broke in upon a nation, firſt ſweeping off their rulers, and then poſſeſſing themſelves of the place? How many reſemblances of that prophecy have we found? *A mighty king ſhall ſtand up, that ſhall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will: And when he ſhall ſtand up, his kingdom ſhall be broken, and divided towards the four winds of heaven; though not to his people; nor according to the dominion which he ruled; for his kingdom ſhall be plucked up even for others beſides thoſe* (*z*).

Thus has Providence cut into the banks of government, interrupted ſucceſſions, and made authority flow in another channel. He has daſhed one tyrant againſt another, that he might break them both like a potter's veſſel; ſo that we may ſay that in modeſty, which *Rabſhakeh* did in a huff, *What have the kings of Aſſyria done to all lands, deſtroying them utterly? as Gozan and Haran, and Rezeph, and the children of Eden, which were in Thelaſar? Where is the king of Hamath, the king of Arpad, and the king of the cities of Sepharvaim, of Hena and Ivah* (*a*)? They are all ſwallowed up in a greater government, and united in the ſame captivity.

(*s*) Job xxxvi. 9.
(*t*) Job xxxvi. 10.
(*u*) Job xxxvi. 11.
(*x*) Job xxxvi. 12.
(*y*) Job xxxvi. 14.
(*z*) Dan. xi. 3, 4.
(*a*) 2 Kings xix. 11, 12, 13.

Upon his command, an army of the loweſt creatures have appeared volunteers in the battle. He plied *Pharaoh* with ſquadrons of *flies*, *frogs*, *locuſts*, *and caterpillers* (*b*). This the magicians confeſſed was the finger of GOD. And ſurely the characters of divinity appear no leſs full and legible, when he ſtirs up one ruler againſt another. He ſent *the Aſſyrian as the ſtaff of his hand*, *and the rod of his indignation*, *againſt an hypocritical people* (*c*); that by feeling their puniſhment, they might remember their GOD. When the nation was tinctured with the vices of the court, he makes but one labour of it, by crowding rulers and people in the ſame drove of captives. He gave them fair warning of this. *The Lord ſhall bring thee*, *and thy king whom thou haſt ſet over thee*, *to a nation which neither thou nor thy fathers have known* (*d*). He threatens this alſo to another people. *I will deliver the Egyptians into the hand of a cruel lord*, *and a fierce king ſhall rule over them* (*e*). Sometimes he does theſe things in mercy to his own intereſt. When they that call upon him are ripe for deliverance, he can ſoon find out inſtruments to bring it about. He ſaid of *Cyrus*, *He is my ſhepherd*, *and ſhall perform all my pleaſure*, *ſaying to Jeruſalem*, *Thou ſhalt be built*; *and to the temple*, *Thy foundation ſhall be laid* (*f*). And therefore he ſaith further to *his anointed*, *even to Cyrus*, *whoſe right hand he upheld*, *I will ſubdue nations before him*, *and he ſhall ſmite through the loins of kings* (*g*). There is none ſo high, but he can eaſily abaſe them: he ordered the prophet *Jeremiah* to aſſert this, and alarm a ſenſual court: *Say to the king and the queen*, *Humble yourſelves and ſit down*; *for your principalities ſhall come down*, *even the crown of your glory* (*h*).

3. GOD brings about theſe Revolutions, by ſtirring up a people to aſſert their juſt rights and liberties. That notion,

(*b*) Exodus viii. 19.
(*c*) Iſa. x. 5, 6.
(*d*) Deut. xxviii. 36.
(*e*) Iſa. xix. 4.
(*f*) Iſa. xliv. 28.
(*g*) Iſa. xlv. 1.
(*h*) Jer. xiii. 18.

notion, that all we have lies at the ruler's mercy, and that he can do us no wrong, was different from *Jonathan*'s opinion: he supposes that the tyranny of a prince, is all an injustice upon the subject, and therefore pleads, *Let not the king sin against his servant, even against David, because he has not sinned against thee* (*i*). And again, *Wherefore wilt thou sin against innocent blood, to slay David without a cause* (*k*)? *Naboth* thought himself bound in conscience to keep his vineyard from *Ahab*. *The Lord forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers to thee* (*l*). And the method which that unrighteous king observed, proved that he had no honest claim, which was first to kill, and then to take possession: A thing that has been often repeated. But sometimes God makes a people weary of this bondage, and resolved to conclude it. He gives them an opportunity of unyoking from the captivity they are in, and then fires up a general resolution to take the advantage.

Thus it was with *Israel*, after they had groaned under their slavery to *Moab* for many years. God is said to *raise them up a deliverer* (*m*), upon their crying to him; the man was *Ehud*, and the methods he was directed to were as violent as the troubles they endured; to stab the tyrant that held them captive. After this, he *blew a trumpet in mount Ephraim* (*n*), and headed the people whom he had begun to rescue. Nay, we have an earlier instance of a nation's heaving off their burden. We read, that *the kings of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboim and Zoar, served Chedorlaomer the king of nations twelve years, and in the thirteenth year they rebelled* (*o*). Now, though their first attempt made their chain the heavier; yet God bore a signal testimony to their cause afterwards, by making *Abram* the instrument of their full release. And this was so remarkable a piece of service,

(*i*) 1 Sam. xix. 4.
(*k*) 1 Sam. xix. 5.
(*l*) 1 Kings xxi. 3.
(*m*) Judges iii. 15.
(*n*) Judges iii. 27.
(*o*) Gen. xiv. 2, 3, 4.

and ſo worthy of him whoſe ſeed *ſhould proclaim deliverance to the captives*, that he is not only *met and bleſſed* by the king of *Sodom*, but by *Melchizedeck the king of Salem* (*p*), a type of the promiſed Saviour and the oracle of more divine bleſſings.

What a joyful reflection does *Deborah* make upon that brave and generous ſpirit which the *Iſraelites* ſhewed in their purſuit of liberty? *Praiſe ye the Lord for the avenging of Iſrael, when the people willingly offered themſelves* (*q*). She afterwards gives a doleful character of thoſe times when they were kept in awe; and from this darker view ſhe takes her riſe, and embalms the courage of their nobility who aſſiſted in that Revolution. *The travellers walked through by-ways* (*r*). *The inhabitants of the villages ceaſed, they ceaſed in Iſrael* (*s*). *Then was there war in the gates; yet was there not a ſhield or a ſpear ſeen among forty thouſand in Iſrael* (*t*). After this complaint comes a noble memorial of praiſe: *My heart is towards the governors of Iſrael that offered themſelves willingly among the people; bleſs ye the Lord* (*u*).

It is ſad when a nation are folding their hands, and putting themſelves into a poſture of ſlavery. This is repreſented in ſcripture ſo far from being a piece of religion, that it is an unmanly ſottiſhneſs. It may be generally obſerved, that the people who ſo eaſily part with their liberties, do it not in any mortification or ſelf-denial, but as an indulgence to ſome perſonal luxury. *Iſſachar is a ſtrong aſs, couching down between two burdens; and he ſaw that reſt was good, and the land that it was pleaſant; and he bowed his ſhoulder to bear, and became a ſervant to tribute* (*x*). Becauſe he would not run the hazard of a battle, therefore he bends to the yoke; and the reaſon that is given for

(*p*) Gen. xiv. 17, 18.
(*q*) Judges v. 2.
(*r*) Judges v. 6.
(*s*) Judges v. 7.
(*t*) Judges v. 8.
(*u*) Judges v. 9.
(*x*) Gen. xlix. 14, 15.

for it is becauſe he ſaw that *reſt was pleaſant:* How debaſed are thoſe apprehenſions that call bondage reſt? His name ſtands in the catalogue of tribes as a foil to that which comes next. *Dan ſhall judge his people as one of the tribes of Iſrael: Dan ſhall be a ſerpent by the way, and an adder in the path, that bites the horſe-heels, ſo that the rider ſhall fall backwards* (*y*). He will not ſuffer himſelf to be trampled on; tyranny ſhall have no high road over him; but like a ſerpent he rolls himſelf about the foot that treads down his liberties; and herein he appears like *one of the tribes of Iſrael*; he vindicates and fills up ſo great a title. And thus in the uſe of his policy and courage *he waits for the ſalvation of God* (*z*).

Uſually in the worſt of times, when the generality of people are tainted with cowardice, God ſtirs up ſome few, that the cauſe may twinkle when it cannot blaze out. Sometimes it ſo happens, that a brave deſigning worthy is almoſt alone. The perſons whom he would deliver, tie up his hands by their notions and their faintneſs. Thus it was with *Samſon*; the *Iſraelites* ſeem to repine that they had a victorious captain among them. They come and adviſe him to a *non-reſiſtance*, and make uſe of their ſubjection as an argument for it. *Knoweſt thou not that the Philiſtines are rulers over us? What is this then that thou haſt done unto us? We are come down to bind thee, that we may deliver thee into their hands* (*a*). Thus that ſluggiſh generation uſually left him to fight alone, till at laſt he died conquering, and periſhed in a triumphant ſlaughter.

There was a more noble ſpirit in *Iſrael* in the concluding and dreggy part of *Saul*'s reign. Many were touched with a juſt reſentment of his arbitrary meaſures, and a compaſſion to *David*, who was fleeing from an unrighteous enemy. And that the records of

(*y*) Gen. xlix. 16, 17.
(*z*) Gen. xlix. 18.
(*a*) Judges xv. 11, 12.

theſe worthies might not be loſt, we have a large catalogue of their names and proceedings. There are ſo many paſſages in that chapter (*b*), that have a bluſh of our late Revolution, that I cannot but turn you to them. You find ſome of the neareſt relatives of the court began this revolt. *Theſe are they that came to David to Ziklag, while he yet kept himſelf cloſe becauſe of Saul the ſon of Kiſh: They were among the mighty men, helpers of the war — even of Saul's brethren of Benjamin* (*c*). We have afterwards the deſcription of another company, who were warmed with the ſpirit of their cauſe. *Of the Gadites, there ſeparated themſelves unto David, into the hold in the wilderneſs, men of might, and men of war fit for the battle, that could handle ſhield and buckler, whoſe faces were like the faces of lions, and were as ſwift as roes upon the mountains* (*d*). *David* meets them with a declaration or manifeſto; *If ye be come peaceably to me to help me, my heart ſhall be knit unto you; but if ye be come to betray me, ſeeing there is no wrong in my hands, the God of our fathers look thereon and rebuke it* (*e*). They anſwer like perſons who were acted from above. And ſuch was the language of thoſe noble peers and gentlemen who helped on the change of government that begun this day. *The ſpirit came upon Amaſai, who was the chief of the captains, and he ſaid, Thine are we David, and on thy ſide, thou ſon of Jeſſe; peace, peace be unto thee, and peace be to thine helpers, for thy God helpeth thee* (*f*).

Again, the army that came to reſcue *England*, was much like *David*'s, it gathered ſtrength and numbers with rolling. *At that time there came people day by day, till it was a great hoſt like the Hoſt of God* (*g*).

And

(*b*) 2 Chron. xii.
(*c*) 2 Chron. xii. 1, 2.
(*d*) 2 Chron. xii. 8.
(*e*) 2 Chron. xii. 17.
(*f*) 2 Chron. xii. 18.
(*g*) 2 Chron. xii. 22.

And laſtly, we find the deſign of this people parallel to that which completed the mercy of our Revolution. *They were ready armed, and came to David, to turn the kingdom of Saul unto him, according to the word of the Lord* (*h*). I have been the longer in this quotation, becauſe if the names were changed, it would be an hiſtory of our deliverance. This is all the LORD's work, he calls the removing of *Saul* his own action. *I gave thee a King in mine anger, and I took him away in my wrath* (*i*). That is, he influenced the courage and reſolution of the people.

There ſeems to be ſuch a ſtruggle for liberty in the ſubjects of *Babylon*, though they were under a King that obeyed very little law but his own will. *Nebuchadnezzar* is depoſed for ſeven years: it is true, the thing was a divine appointment; but his people are employed as the executioners of it. This is the phraſe of the threatning, *They ſhall drive thee from men, and they ſhall make thee eat graſs as oxen, and they ſhall wet thee with the dew of heaven* (*k*). And upon the recovery of his honour and reaſon, he was reſtored to the empire by their means; this he acknowledges, *My counſellers and my lords ſought unto me, and I was eſtabliſhed in my kingdom, and excellent majeſty was added to me* (*l*). Now the ſin that might ſtir up both GOD and man againſt him, ſeems to be injuſtice and cruelty, the ſcandals of an arbitrary government; for it muſt be ſomething contrary to *Daniel*'s advice, *viz.* That he would *break off his ſins by righteouſneſs, and his iniquities by ſhewing mercy to the poor, if it might be a lengthning of his tranquillity* (*m*). This account of the ſame matter *Daniel* gives to *Belſhazzar*; ſpeaking of his grandfather, he ſays, *when his heart was lifted up, and his mind was hardned in pride, he was depoſed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him* (*n*).

(*h*) 2 Chron. xii. 23.
(*i*) Hoſ. xiii. 11.
(*k*) Dan. iv. 25.
(*l*) Dan. iv. 36.
(*m*) Dan. iv. 4.
(*n*) Dan. v. 20.

II. The next thing is, to give you an account, what PRAISE is owing to GOD for such remarkable changes as these. How must it be expressed? This I have no time to answer with an enlargement. In short, it is to be done by a great opinion of his power and love, a devotedness to his will, a zeal for the interest of his glory, a cautious distance from whatever offends him; a strong hope in his mercy for the time to come, and an acknowledgement of his agency in the whole deliverance. This being too much for our time, I shall,

III. Inquire into the GROUNDS of the obligation; or why such Revolutions as these should engage us to bless and adore our LORD. Here I will mention some of those designs that these Providences are aimed at; which are these,

1. To assert GOD's sovereignty, and make his name glorious. To teach us, that *promotion comes not from the east, west, or south, but God is judge; he pulls down one, and sets up another* (*o*). At such times he vindicates that character, *he accepteth not the persons of princes, nor regardeth the rich more than the poor, for they are all the works of his hand* (*p*). And therefore our practices fall in with the genuine design and course of the Providence. All the terrors that *Nebuchadnezzar* felt, were to beat this conviction into him. *Seven times were to pass over him, till he knew that the most High ruled in the kingdom of men, and gave it to whomsoever he pleased* (*q*). He must live the life of a beast, till he comes to use the reason of a man.

Such as lie soft in all the delights of greatness, are very apt to have their consciences dozed with what they enjoy: and they seldom want those who help on the charm with flattery. There are some who *make*

(*o*) Psal. lxxv. 6, 7.
(*p*) Job xxxiv. 18.
(*q*) Dan. iv. 25.

make the King glad with their wickedneſs, and the Princes with their lies (*r*). They alſo make him *ſick with bottles of wine, ſo that he ſtretcheth out his hands with the ſcorners* (*s*). They call them gods on earth, but tempt them to live as if there were none in heaven. Many pretend to repreſent the Majeſty above, but, alas, too often it is no otherwiſe than a traitor may be ſaid to repreſent his Sovereign, becauſe he rebels in the royal livery.

To be ſure the great Fountain of all equity and goodneſs, can give them no power to violate and oppreſs the liberties of their ſubjects.

For, as one has lately obſerved *, he *has* no ſuch power himſelf, and conſequently it is a falſhood to pretend any is received from him. He made it the *magna charta* of *Iſrael*, that their King ſhould be often reading in his law, *that his mind might not be lifted up above his brethren, and that he might prolong his days in his kingdom* (*t*). When they receive the flatteries of people who love not the ſtrictneſs of Religion, and humour a ſenſual court, they throw off all regard to heaven. After the death of good *Jehoiada, the Princes of Judah came and made obeiſance to the King, and the King hearkned unto them: and they left the houſe of the Lord God of their fathers, and ſerved groves and idols, till wrath came upon Judah and Jeruſalem for this their treſpaſs* (*u*). He parted with his Religion for a compliment.

Now, when they are running out into this extravagance, it is time to draw the reins, and let them know there is an higher Sovereign. *Samuel* calls *Saul* a rebel, becauſe he had not paid a ſuitable deference to the Majeſty above; and tells him that God would diſtrain for his right. *Rebellion is as the ſin of witchcraft, and ſtubbornneſs is as iniquity and idolatry; becauſe*

(*r*) Hoſ. vii. 3.
(*s*) Hoſ. vii. 5.
(*t*) Deut. xvii. 20.
(*u*) 2 Chron. xxiv. 17, 18.

* Mr *Fleetwood*, in his Thankſgiving Sermon.

cauſe thou haſt rejected the word of the Lord, the Lord has rejected thee from being King (*x*). We read in this propheſy of a King, *whoſe power ſhall be mighty, but not by his own power; and he ſhall deſtroy wonderfully, and ſhall proſper and practiſe, and deſtroy the mighty and the holy people: And through his policy he ſhall cauſe craft to proſper in his hand, and ſhall magnify himſelf in his heart, and by peace ſhall deſtroy many:* but when he ſtands up againſt *the Prince of princes, he ſhall be broken without hand* (*y*). They that will not give the *things that are God's*, are likely to loſe the *things that are Ceſar's*.

2. To puniſh the injuſtice and cruelty which the earth has groaned under. *The King that faithfully judgeth the poor, his throne ſhall be eſtabliſhed for ever* (*z*). But as *a roring lion, or a raging bear, ſo is a wicked ruler over a poor people* (*a*). GOD will wreſt a government out of the hands of thoſe that defile and abuſe it. The wiſe man was ſo fully aſſured of this, that he would have the injured believe a time of recompence is coming. *Seeſt thou the oppreſſion of the poor, and the violent perverting of judgment and juſtice in a province; marvel not at the matter, for he that is higher than the higheſt regards it, and there be higher than they* (*b*). He has often given battle to thoſe that delight in blood and haughtineſs; as they have ſhown no pity to their inferiors, nor veneration for the laws, ſo they have had *judgment without mercy*. It is ſo great a part of the divine character to ſave the oppreſſed, and puniſh evil-doers, that *David* makes his importunate claim for ſuch an appearance. *O God, to whom vengeance belongs, O Lord, to whom vengeance belongeth, lift up thyſelf, thou Judge of the earth, and render a reward to the proud; how long ſhall the wicked, how long ſhall the wicked triumph* (*c*)?

And

(*x*) 1 Sam. xv. 23.
(*y*) Dan. viii. 24, 25.
(*z*) Prov. xxix. 14.
(*a*) Prov. xxviii. 15.
(*b*) Eccleſ. v. 8.
(*c*) Pſal. xciv. 1, 2, 3.

And is not this matter of praiſe? It mingles the glories of his power and juſtice: we behold him both as a mighty and a righteous GOD in the ſame view. And when he ſounds his own praiſe with ſuch a loudneſs of Providence, can *they that love his ſalvation be ſilent?* They muſt ſay, *Let the Lord be magnified, who takes pleaſure in the proſperity of his ſervants; he is known by the judgment which he executes; the wicked are ſnared in the work of their own hands* (*d*).

3. To relieve and ſuccour his own people. He will not ſuffer the cauſe of his ſervants to periſh. Though Princes and the great ones of the earth ſhould be the aſſailants, yet they *imagine a vain thing* (*e*). Religion ſhall have a ſettlement and a glory, either by their favour, or in their ruin. *No weapon that is formed againſt thee ſhall proſper, and every tongue that ſhall riſe againſt thee in judgment, thou ſhalt condemn: this the heritage of the ſervants of the Lord, and their righteouſneſs is of me, ſaith the Lord* (*f*). Nay, ſo jealous is he of their peace, that he has expreſſed his reſentment of any haughtineſs toward them, though one of his own people ſhould be the offender; their religious liberties, the appointments of his houſe, muſt not be rifled.

Uzziah has the character of one that *walked in the ways of the Lord* (*g*). He is alſo repreſented as a great artiſt in war, ſo that *his name ſpread far abroad, for he was marvellouſly helped till he was ſtrong.* But when he had the vanity to break in upon the inſtitutions of the temple, and commit a rapine upon a divine incloſure, immediately GOD ſtains his honour with a leproſy. He is ſeparated from all public affairs, and *cut off from the houſe of the Lord.* GOD has always ſhewn a tenderneſs of heart for them, who have any tenderneſs of conſcience for him. They are

(*d*) Pſal. xl. 16. xxxv. 27. ix. 16.
(*e*) Pſal. ii. 1.
(*f*) Iſai. liv. 17.
(*g*) 2 Chron. xxvi. 15.

are dear in his eyes, he ſets an higher rate upon them than he does on a vicious ruler. They have the preference in his care: *He ſuffers no man to do them wrong*; nay, *He reproves kings for their ſakes, ſaying, Touch not mine anointed* (*h*). It is ſpoke to the honour of *Aſa*, that *he removed Maachah his mother from being queen, becauſe ſhe had made an idol in a grove* (*i*): and this GOD owned with a reward of proſperity in his affairs.

Now, may not this awaken all the powers of gratitude? Here is a glorious vein of compaſſion to us running through the whole bulk of the Providence. Though there is ſo much terrible in it to the ungodly, yet it is all checquered with *love to the daughters of Jeruſalem.*

4. To make way for CHRIST's further advancement. All theſe Revolutions are ſo many pioneers to *prepare the way of the Lord, and make his paths ſtraight.* He will *overturn, overturn, overturn it, until he come whoſe right it is, and will give it him* (*k*). That liſt of changes which *Daniel* ſaw in his dream, were all ſo many ſteps to a Mediator's empire. *In the days of theſe things ſhall the God of heaven ſet up a kingdom, which ſhall never be deſtroyed; and the kingdom ſhall not be left to other people, but it ſhall break in pieces and conſume all thoſe kingdoms, and it ſhall ſtand for ever* (*l*).

All power is now *given to him in heaven and earth:* he has a claim to the allegiance of the world, and we hope the day is coming, when he will more viſibly aſſert it; when promiſes ſhall quicken into Providence, and what he has told his people in words he will give them in things. This is a government that ſhall never ceaſe, *a King who muſt not be removed; his name ſhall endure for ever, his name ſhall continue as the*

(*h*) Pſalm civ. 14, 15.
(*i*) 2 Chron. xv. 16.
(*k*) Ezek. xxi. 25, 26.
(*l*) Daniel ii. 44.

the ſun; men ſhall be bleſſed in him, and all nations ſhall call him bleſſed (*m*).

APPLICATION.

See how dear GOD's people are to their LORD, and how ſoon they may come by their deliverance. He can dethrone thoſe ruling powers, who are the chief movements in any deſign againſt them; ſuch as guide and ſtir all the inferior wheels. The ſucceſs of theſe vaſt intrigues againſt religion uſually depends upon the power of ſome one man: now, how eaſily can GOD cruſh the numerous hopes that are gathered up in that perſon? He threatens to *cut off the King of Samaria as ſome upon the water* (*n*).

And this is that great exploit of love which we are come to admire. Some years ago the eyes of *Europe* were waiting to ſee *England* plunged either in popery or blood. Every thing ſeemed to promiſe the mother of abominations either a converſion among us, or a conqueſt over us. They had actually got a monarch in our own nation to head the intereſt. We were already beginning to have a religion without goſpel, and a government without law. What a treachery and compliance was there amongſt thoſe who ſhould have contended earneſtly for the purity of their faith, and the rights of their country? What an unhappineſs would the notions of thoſe times have brought us to, when we muſt neither defend the life that we now have, nor inquire into that we hereafter expect? Our hold of this life was loſt in the doctrine of non-reſiſtance, and our ſtudy of a better was to be drowned in an implicit faith. But *bleſſed be God for ever and ever, wiſdom and might are his, he changeth the times and ſeaſons, he removeth Kings, and ſetteth up Kings.*

He ſtirred up his people to depoſe the man whom they could not before exclude. Though they failed in

(*m*) Pſalm lxxii. 17. (*n*) Hoſea x. 7.

in resisting his claim, yet they effectually seized his forfeiture. He graciously found them a person, who was first their Captain to recover Christian Faith and English Liberties, and then their King to defend them. And by his rich furniture of courage, wisdom, integrity and temper, he appeared to be one of heaven's own rearing, *a King whom God himself had set up*; prepared with valour to empty the throne, and with conduct to fill it. With what an expedition and calmness was all this done? Though there was such a waste of noble blood in bringing King JAMES to the crown, yet there is none spilt in chasing him from it. GOD put this early credit upon the Prince of *Orange*, by making the easiness of his victory describe the virtue of his cause, which was not to destroy *England*, but to save it. And this was the time which was *turned unto us from sorrow to joy, and from mourning to a good day* (*o*).

We may also bless GOD that he has guarded his own work from the ravage of men. Some have taken pains to unhinge our settlement, by setting up the degenerate plant of a strange vine. They say of *England*, as others did of *Judah*, *Let us go up against it and vex it, and make a breach therein for us, and set a king in the midst of it, even the son of Tabeal* (*p*). But see the goodness of our GOD. We have not only escaped their mischief in our own borders, but have been able to crush it in distant nations. The *English* sword has both defended its own inclosure, and digged up the *French* plants in other parts.

He has quickened the principles of our Revolution in *France*; and though the persons that espouse that cause are but an handful, yet they may spread out like *Elijah*'s cloud, till they darken the face of that heaven. He has maintained the same principles in *England*, by giving us another Sovereign upon the Revolution foot, and making her so zealous to secure our

(*o*) Esth. ix. 22. (*p*) Isa. vii. 6.

our liberties from the invaſion of thoſe abroad, and the peeviſhneſs of ſeveral at home. May the ſame bleſſing ſtill go along with her, to ſmother both inteſtine broils and foreign tyrannies; to preſerve the rights of people where they are eſtabliſhed, and reſtore them where they are loſt. Let our chief regard be gathered up to the ſupreme fountain of theſe mercies. Let us live like a people ſaved by the LORD, and be preparing for that auguſt and bleſſed day when the governments of this world ſhall all diſſolve, and our *eyes ſee the King* of Heaven *in his beauty*, and the glory of the *land that is* now *afar off* (*q*).

(*q*) Iſa. xxxiii. 17.

SERMON

SERMON VII.

The Divine Right of the Revolution.

Preached NOVEMBER 5, 1707.

1 CHRON. XII. 23.

These are the numbers of the bands, that were ready armed to the war, and came to David to Hebron, to turn the kingdom of Saul to him, according to the word of the Lord.

THIS chapter is the history of a noble Revolution in the land of *Israel*; and there are several things in it so like *ours*, that the same lines of character may describe them both. The courses of Providence towards us, are so plain a copy of what we read in the Bible, as if that Book did not tell us the case of other people, but was prophetic of our own. I believe indeed, that such passages are a fair account of what happened in those days; we here read the great works that GOD did *in the times of old*. But they are capable of a more extensive notion, and may be considered as the rule and sample of future wonders. When we look over this chapter with the nearest application to ourselves, it will bear the remark that

our LORD made upon another place, *This day are these Scriptures fulfilled in your ears.*

We have here a list of those brave Worthies that gave up themselves to *seek the welfare of Israel*, and have it secured in a better establishment. Some of them are more early in their appearance than others.

First, We have their names set down who *came to David to Ziklag, whilst he kept himself close because of Saul the son of Kish; and they were among the mighty men, helpers of the war* (*a*). GOD inspired them with a tender sense of the injuries offered to that good man, and their own common peace. These join with him in an evil day, when the tyranny of a distorted court had *driven him out of the land, from abiding in the inheritance of the Lord*, and laid him under temptations *to go and serve other gods* (*b*). Their generous friendship has a peculiar record, *There fell some of Manasseh to David, when he came with the Philistines against Saul to battle* (*c*). These made the first attempt to break the bondage that they were under to a cruel Prince, and took a share with *David*, whilst he was driven like *a partridge upon the mountains.* This gave them such an endearment to him, that he sends up their names to heaven, and recommends them there. *Let them shout for joy, and be glad that favour my righteous cause; yea, let them say continually, Let the Lord be magnified, who has pleasure in the prosperity of his servant*; and then *my tongue shall speak of thy righteousness, and of thy praise all the day long* (*d*).

Secondly, Here is another catalogue of those that flowed in to the same undertaking; but it was after their King had been *cut off for his transgression* (*e*), as GOD himself calls it. They all knew he had left a son behind him, and there was a party who could never so well fix their own interest as upon that bottom:

(*a*) 1 Chron. xii. 1.
(*b*) 1 Sam. xxvi. 19.
(*c*) 1 Chron. xii. 19.
(*d*) Psal. xxxv. 27, 28.
(*e*) 1 Chron. x. 13.

tom: but the main body of the tribes had their thoughts better turned, they do not suffer their reason and the public peace to be inslaved with a groundless notion; but get themselves *ready armed to the war, and came to David at Hebron, to turn the kingdom from Saul to him, according to the word of the Lord.*

Here you see *First*, The design with which they unite, a common inclination to *turn the kingdom from Saul to David*; and, *Secondly*, what it was that guided them in it; *the word of the Lord.*

The design or cause that they came about was, to turn the kingdom of *Saul* to *David.* He was now dead in battle under a signal frown of Providence. God had laid him aside with a more than ordinary scandal upon him. And as he forfeited the crown himself, so he destroyed the claim of his family. It is true, he kept up the name and figure of a King, till his woful life sunk upon mount *Gilboa*; but his title was demolished, God had publicly disowned him: those words were leveled at him in person, when *Samuel* refused the common civility of a subject, and told him, *I will not return with thee: thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord has rejected thee from being King over Israel* (*f*). And when Providence made the full seizure afterwards, it was but the late execution of this sentence. He was virtually dethroned when the Prophet told him, *The Lord has rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and given it to a neighbour of thine, that is better than thou* (*g*). To fulfil these things, was that which these people came about to *Hebron.*

That which gave the design all its life, and made it prosper, was, its being *according to the word of the Lord.* This may signify one or both of these things;

1. It made good the prophecies that God had given his people by *Samuel.* These are the express words of the story. *All the elders of Israel came to the King*

(*f*) 1 Sam. xv. 26. (*g*) 1 Sam. xv. 28.

to Hebron; and David made a covenant with them in Hebron before the Lord, and they anointed David King over Israel, according to the word of the Lord, by Samuel (*h*). This divine institution was a thing universally known. Besides the threatning against *Saul*, which I have but newly read, *David* was set apart to the government with the deepest solemnity *in the presence of all his brethren.* He owns this, when he comes to disrobe, and lay down the authority that he had worn forty years. He resigns it, as he took it, under the notion of a grant from heaven. *The Lord God of Israel has chosen Judah to be the Ruler, and of the house of Judah the house of my father, and among the sons of my father, he liked me to make me King over Israel* (*i*). And the interval between his consecration to the office and his enjoyment of it, cleared the title: he was disposed of into such a life, as proved a working him up for the throne. In his troubles he went to dwell with *Samuel* at *Naioth* in *Ramah.* This fixed the eyes of all the people upon him. It was the universal sense of the nation, that God had chosen him to rule *the tribes of his inheritance.* Nay the persons who set themselves against this design, were stung with a conviction that thus it would be: as *Jonathan* tells *David*, when he went to him *in the wood, Fear not*, says he, *for the hand of Saul my father shall not find thee: thou shalt be King over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee, and that also Saul my father knows* (*k*). And *Abner* himself, who made such a bustle to keep the succession in the right line as he pretended, when he comes over, has his tongue very ready at the common argument: *The Lord hath spoken of David, saying, By the hand of David my servant will I save my people out of the hand of the Philistines, and out of the hand of all their enemies* (*l*).

2. Their doing this *according to the word of the Lord*, may signify those particular directions that he gave

(*h*) 1 Chron. xi. 3.
(*i*) 1 Chron. xxiii. 5.
(*k*) 1 Sam. xxiii. 17.
(*l*) 2 Sam. iii. 18.

gave them in the management. He did not only appoint the mercy, and nouriſh their hopes of it, but he ſtirs up the people with an eſpecial force and life to cloſe the deſign. He makes uſe of their unanimity and zeal as the tools of Providence. *As for God his way is perfect, the word of the Lord is tried: he girds me with ſtrength, and makes my way perfect: he makes my feet like hinds feet, and ſets me up on my high places. Thou haſt given me the ſhield of thy ſalvation; thy right hand has holden me up, and thy gentleneſs has made me great; thou haſt enlarged my ſteps under me* (*m*). In that ſong he enlivens the whole ſtory of this mighty change, and turns it into praiſe. For, as you ſee in the title of it, *He ſpake theſe words to the Lord in the day that he was delivered from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul.*

If you take the text in both theſe ſenſes, it may be applied to any deliverance in our days. They are *according to the word of the Lord.* Though we have not the names of perſons, and the particular forms of mercy ſet out ſo plainly as the *Jews* had them; yet they are all conducted by the general funds of promiſe that refer to New Teſtament ages. They may be called his *ariſing to viſit Sion* (*n*); it is the breaking forth of *his thoughts of peace towards us*, and giving his captives *an expected end* (*o*). We wait for the enlargement of the Church, the tumble of *Babylon:* when the pomp and ſorceries of *the harlot* lie floating as a great wreck, then *the year of his redeemed is come.* And this is no other than words quickened into life; the Bible breathing in Providence; it is *the myſtery of God that* ſhould be *finiſhed, as he has declared to his ſervants the Prophets* (*p*). And then it is *according to the word of the Lord.* If you conſider what a noble diſplay of Providence the happy ſcenes have opened

(*m*) Pſal. xviii. 30, 32, 33, 35, 36.
(*n*) Pſal. cii. 13.
(*o*) Jer. xxix. 11.
(*p*) Rev. x. 7.

with. It is *the recompence of God*, *the vengeance of his temple*; *the inquisition that he makes for blood*, and his kind remembring *the cry of the humble*. So that I may give you the general truth of the words, and adapt them to the mercy of the day in this

Doct. Such Revolutions in government, as make for the common advantage and peace, fall in with God's purpose, and are under the conduct of Providence.

We mean no less than all this, when we say, they are *according to the word of the Lord*. I must neither forget the text nor the day; but as the one leads me into the other, I will consider what is remarkable in them both, under the following method.

I. I shall observe what account we have of this Revolution, the *turning of the kingdom* from the house of *Saul* to *David*.

II. Consider that great affair, as it was *according to the word of the Lord*.

1. Here is the history of a change in the government, that God himself allowed among his people. I shall not run through the whole account, but only touch upon some things that are most valuable in their case, and may be easily transferred to ours. What I have to say upon this subject shall be ranged under these two heads, *Saul*'s forfeiture, and *David*'s title.

(1.) The kingdom is rent from *Saul*, who may be called *the Lord's anointed* in a more significant way than any person in the world now can be. He was mentioned by name to *Samuel*. He had *a vial of oil* poured upon his head, and the ceremony expounded the same moment; *Is it not because the Lord has anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance* (*q*)? To make it more evident, he had another heart given to him, *the Spirit of the Lord came upon him*; he prophesies,

(*q*) 1 Sam. x. 1.

phesies, and was in all his actions so much above himself, that all who knew him before-time said one to another, *What is this that is come unto the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the Prophets?* He was afterwards chosen by lot, and then presented to the people, who received him with shouts of approbation. His royal guards were *a band of men whose hearts God had touched.* He gives a noble handsel of his having the spirit of government, by raising the siege at *Jabesh-Gilead*, and defeating the *Ammonites* so completely, that *not two of them were left together.* This was so visible an instance of God's appointing him, that they go to *Gilgal*, and *renew the kingdom there*; *they sacrifice peace-offerings, and Saul and the men of Israel rejoiced greatly before the Lord.* And yet, though his title is so well confirmed, he dissolves it by mal-administration; and this was publicly known. Indeed, with much ado, he gets *Samuel* to *honour him before the elders of the people*, but he *came no more to see him till the day of his death*; and though he *mourned for him*, yet this was testimony enough of *the Lord's repenting that he had made Saul King over Israel.* The notions of an indelible character, and a sacred person who could do no wrong, and must suffer no justice, belong rather to the language of *Ashdod*, than of *Canaan.*

There are six things that the Scripture has laid to his charge as the provocations of Almighty justice against him.

1. The first miscarriage of his reign was a woful diffidence of God. The story is a very awful one. When *Samuel* had anointed him, he gives him several signs that might be as a prop to his faith and courage: but, among the rest of the things, he lays before him one plan of his duty that was not to take place till some time afterwards. *Thou shalt go down before me to Gilgal, and behold I come down unto thee, to offer burnt-offerings and to sacrifice sacrifices of peace-offerings*;

ſeven days ſhalt thou tarry, till I come unto thee, and ſhew thee what thou ſhalt do (r). It is the firſt act of obedience that GOD required of him, and it ſeems to be given as a teſt of his behaviour. And indeed it proved the turning point, upon which the continuance or the diſſolution of his authority depended. It was two years after that he came to *Gilgal*, his army was trembling, the *Philiſtines* ready to ſwallow him up. At that time he had the weight of this charge upon his conſcience. He remembered with what ſolemnity the command was given, but here is a mighty encounter between fear and duty. *He tarried ſeven days, according to the ſet time that Samuel had appointed (s)*, *i. e.* to the beginning of the ſeventh day, as that paſſage is uſually underſtood, *but Samuel came not to Gilgal, and the people were ſcattered from him, and Saul ſaid, Bring hither a burnt-offering to me, and peace-offerings.* Some writers think the crime of this action was his own preſenting the ſacrifice, which was a work that GOD had ſeparated an whole tribe to. But we need not go ſo deep in conjecture to find out his wickedneſs. Here is a viſible ſlur upon the Providence that had kept him thus far. You ſee how little he makes of a command, when he ſuffers the appearance of danger to get the maſtery over his convictions. You find, he does it with a regret; *I ſaw that the people were ſcattered from me, and that thou*, ſays he to *Samuel*, *cameſt not within the days appointed*, and *that the Philiſtines gathered themſelves together to Michmaſh, therefore ſaid I, the Philiſtines will come down to me to Gilgal, and I have not made ſupplication to the Lord, I forced myſelf therefore, and offered a burnt-offering (t).* This made a gap in his conſcience, and was the beginning of a careleſs diſſolute reign: we read of few applications to GOD afterwards: for *David* complains and gives this as the reaſon why he would

(r) 1 Sam. x. 8.
(s) 1 Sam. xiii. 7, 9.
(t) 1 Sam. xiii. 11, 12.

would *bring back the ark of God, becauſe*, ſays he, *we enquired not at it in the days of Saul (u).*

This is a caſe ſo very much perſonal, that it was intirely his own: but yet there may be a parallel to it in the carriage of others. It is a crime of the ſame malignity, when princes have no regard to the chief obligations of their place; when they fall into meaſures of their own, and do any thing that either fear or paſſion hurries them to, rather than take the plain dictates of law and conſcience. Theſe forces of juſtice make a perſon odious in the ſight of GOD and man. *The King by judgment eſtabliſheth the land; but he that receiveth gifts overthrows it (x).*

2. Another thing that *Saul* was charged with, is, his partiality to the *Amalekites*. They were *the firſt of the nations* that made an attack upon *Iſrael* when they came out of *Egypt*; but as *Balaam* ſaid of them, *Their latter end was to be deſtroyed for ever (y)*. There was ſo much inhumanity and baſeneſs in that action, that GOD preſerved it in the memory of his people, and conſigned it over to their vengeance. *Remember what Amalek did to thee by the way, when ye came forth out of Egypt: how he met thee by the way, and ſmote the hindermoſt of thee, even all that were feeble behind thee, and feared not God; Therefore it ſhall be when the Lord thy God has given thee reſt from all thine enemies round about, in the land which the Lord thy God has given thee for an inheritance to poſſeſs it, that thou ſhalt blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under Heaven; thou ſhalt not forget it (z)*. Here was an awful reſentment of their cruelty, and it is in purſuance of this quarrel that GOD put *Saul* upon that expedition. *I remember what Amalek did to Iſrael, how he laid wait for him by the way when they came out of Egypt. Now go and ſmite Amalek, and utterly deſtroy all that they have, and ſpare them not, but ſlay man*

(u) 1 Chron. xiii. 3.
(x) Prov. xxix. 4.
(y) Numb. xxiv. 20.
(z) Deut. xxv. 17, 18, 19.

man and woman, infant and ſuckling, oxen and ſheep, camel and aſs (*a*). Here, inſtead of hearty obedience he *does the work of the Lord deceitfully:* he *ſpared Agag, and the beſt of the ſheep and oxen, and the fatlings and lambs, and all that was good would he not utterly deſtroy, but every thing that was vile and refuſe they deſtroyed utterly* (*b*). So that his obedience was luſt rather than duty.

This ſhuffling with the command proved fatal to him. God has an early reſentment of it, and tells *Samuel, It repents me that I have ſet up Saul to be King, for he is turned back from following me, and has not performed my commandment* (*c*). The ingratitude of this is what the prophet urges upon his conſcience. *When thou waſt little in thine own ſight, waſt thou not made head over the tribes of Iſrael? and the Lord anointed thee king over Iſrael; and he ſent thee on a journey, and ſaid, Go, and deſtroy the ſinners the Amalekites, and fight againſt them until they be conſumed. Wherefore then didſt thou not obey the voice of the Lord, but didſt fly upon the ſpoil, and didſt evil in the ſight of the Lord* (*d*)?

A little recollection will help us to turn theſe things upon our own caſe. I need not tell you what people have the vileſt name in our laws, and are always moſt ready to embroil the conſtitution. They have fallen upon us, *when we were faint and weary; and feared not God:* and yet theſe *Amalekites* are more than ſpared. Indeed, chriſtianity is no doctrine of blood; there is nothing more remote from it, than perſecution and cruelty. But it is very ill when they, who have been the tools of our public confuſions, are received into places of honour and truſt, in defiance of law and all the common cries of danger. The party, who have the blood of above two hundred thouſand laid at their doors in a neighbouring kingdom;

(*a*) 1 Sam. xv. 2, 3.
(*b*) 1 Sam. xv. 9.
(*c*) 1 Sam. xv. 11.
(*d*) 1 Sam. xv. 17.

kingdom; these were impowered with new capacities of doing mischief. A few links more to their chain, would have given them compass enough to have destroyed our religion, parliament, and all the courses of justice, and leave us to the discipline of a ravenous army. We may look upon our protection in those days with wonder. It was the blessing of that promise; *Thou shalt keep them, O Lord, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.* When *the wicked walk on every side, and the vilest men are exalted* (*e*). The faction, whom our Kings are sworn to guard us from at their coronation, these had the power of the sword and the bench. The extreme zeal that appeared in the prosecution of our best nobility and gentry, might lead us into that lamentation, *Our necks are under persecution, we labour and have no rest: Servants have rule over us; there is none that delivers out of their hand* (*f*). Men of low and base original, *viler than the earth*, but raised to be the engines of tyranny. *Princes are hanged up by the hand, the faces of the elders were not honoured* (*g*). And that apparent invasion of our privileges, in denying us a parliament, may be fitly expressed in these words, *The elders have ceased from the gates* (*h*). Is not this sparing and advancing a people that have shewn so long an antipathy to the peace of *Israel?* We may easily forget *the cry of the humble*; but God remembered what *Amalek* did; and the sin of *Babylon* is as deeply engraven, as we shall know, when they who are *drunk with the blood of the saints, and the martyrs of* Jesus, come to have their *flesh eaten, and burnt with fire.*

3. *Saul*'s killing the *Gibeonites*, is another of those crimes that lay heavy upon him. These were a people received into solemn covenant, and had enjoyed a limited privilege for several ages; but at last there are some

(*e*) Psalm xii. 7, 8.
(*f*) Lam. v. 5, 8.
(*g*) Lam. v. 12.
(*h*) Lam. v. 14.

ſome reaſons of ſtate for cutting them off. Indeed, we have no full account of this, till the beginning of *David*'s reign, and then the wickedneſs of doing it is revived in a terrible famine. This public calamity raged among them for three years, and God tells *David*, *It is for Saul, and for his bloody houſe, becauſe he ſlew the Gibeonites* (*i*): Which he is ſaid to do *out of his zeal for the children of Iſrael and Judah.* It is ſtrange, that the man who ſpared the *Amalekites*, ſhould be ſo cruel to thoſe that never offended him: he has an air of compaſſion againſt a precept, and none at all for it. Will not God be *avenged on ſuch a nation as this?*

The iniquity of our times that bears a parallel to it is *writ with a pen of iron, and the point of a diamond; it is engraven,* as God ſays, *in the rock for ever.* Need I tell you now how jails and gallows, perſecution in the moſt hideous forms, were the uſual arguments of the party; and that for no other crime, than the ſerving of God with a peace of conſcience. We had witneſſes and juries contrived on purpoſe, and thus *by ſwearing, and lying, and killing, and ſtealing, they break out, and blood toucheth blood* (*k*). Can a courſe ſo vile as this be to repreſent God? Muſt a perſon that rages beyond all the bounds of temper be called *his anointed?* What dreadful Ideas will an oppreſſed people have of theſe titles? Such barbarous treacheries cry for vengeance to *the Lord God of Sabaoth.* He remembered the caſe of the *Gibeonites* a long while after the injury was given, and he is not to be appeaſed, till juſtice is done on the offenders. *The man that conſumed us, and deviſed againſt us, that we ſhould be deſtroyed from remaining in any of the coaſts of Iſrael; Let ſeven men of his ſons be given us, and we will hang them up unto the Lord in Gibeah of Saul, whom the Lord did chooſe* (*l*).

4. His

(*i*) 1 Sam. xxi. 1.
(*k*) Hoſ. iv. 2.
(*l*) 2 Sam. xxi. 5, 6.

4. His unnatural cruelty to *David:* this had no other provocation to lead it on, but the worth of the perſon againſt whom it was directed. *Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous; but who can ſtand before envy* (*m*)*?* When people are affronted with the integrity of another, the chriſtian has a ſad choice, either to loſe his peace with man or that with conſcience. Beſides *David*'s ſervice to the public, there was another engagement upon *Saul*, I mean, the relation he had brought him into; though it was no love on the father's part that guided it, but a meer ſelfiſh policy, *he gives him his daughter, that ſhe might be a ſnare to him* (*n*). Yet, after an obligation ſo enhanced, he purſues him upon the mountains, though *there was no iniquity in his hand.* He is uneaſy at the favours that *Jonathan* ſhews him, and ſpeaks in a language, one would think, beneath a throne; *Thou ſon of a perverſe rebellious woman, do I not know, that thou haſt choſen the ſon of Jeſſe to thy confuſion; for as long as he lives upon the ground, thou ſhalt not be eſtabliſhed in thy kingdom* (*o*). And if you look into the fatal occaſion of this uneaſineſs, you will be able to think what it was that kept it working. When *David came from the ſlaughter of the* Philiſtines, the ſongs of *Iſrael* attended him with that praiſe, *Saul has ſlain his thouſands, and David his ten thouſands*; and it is ſaid, *the king eyed him from that day forwards*, and complained, *What can he have more but the kingdom?* The furious purſuit of this quarrel I will not turn you to; it lies abroad in the hiſtory, he that runs may read it.

You need not be at any violent pains to fix this matter upon ourſelves with a pertinent application. The methods that were taken to defraud the late King with his royal Conſort, and her preſent Majeſty, are notorious enough; they flung in the meaneſt impoſture, ſhams beneath the dignity of a throne, as a bar

(*m*) Prov. xxvii. 4.
(*n*) 1 Sam. xviii. 21.
(*o*) 1 Sam. xx. 30.

a bar between the nation and their happineſs. *Solomon* has taught us what to think of a court that gives any protection to forgery. *When a ruler hearkens to lies, all his ſervants are wicked* (*p*). When ill deſigns are carried on by worſe methods, can any name make the deluſion ſacred? Does a fair title need to be ſupported with artifice and violence, or can a bad one be defended by it? No, GOD has *broken the net, and we are eſcaped* (*q*). We live to ſee, that all their intrigues to hinder our ſettlement were in vain; he has diſappointed the devices of the crafty, ſo that their hands could not perform their enterprize.

5. Another fatal miſcarriage that we meet with in *Saul*'s hiſtory, is, his *killing the prieſts of the Lord.* This was a paſſion inflamed by a private jealouſy. *Ahimelech* had given *David* ſome bread, and *Goliath*'s ſword; and this was obſerved by *Doeg the Edomite.* Upon which, the king charges them with conſpiracy againſt him; and to make out the plot, there is only the evidence of a profane ſtranger. *Saul* commands the ſoldiers to ſhed their blood, but they ſtarted back from a thing ſo vile and hateful: but the man, who had ſo little conſcience as to be an informer, takes upon himſelf the laſt part of that tragedy: ſo that *on one day, there fell fourſcore and five perſons wearing a linen Ephod* (*r*).

Such a brutal exceſs as this, is enough to ſet the crown a tottering. *Mercy and truth preſerve the King, and his throne is upheld by mercy* (*s*). And the reverſe to theſe, carries an unavoidable ruin in it. It is time for Providence to take the alarm, and ſcatter a diffuſive thunder. Here is profaneneſs and cruelty joined, when the miniſters of the LORD's houſe are made *the off-ſcouring of the earth.* Theſe ſeverities have ſtrained the conſtitution of empires. When once men run into the fury of perſecution, they are only

(*p*) Proverbs xxix. 12.
(*q*) Pſalm cxxiv. 7.
(*r*) 1 Sam. xxii. 18.
(*s*) Proverbs xx. 28.

only digging a pit for themſelves. *Jeruſalem* is to be both *a cup of trembling, and a burdenſome ſtone to all the people that are gathered againſt her* (*t*). The cry of thoſe *under the altar*, ſhall be heard at laſt againſt them that *live on the earth*, and then *the things that ſhall come upon them make haſte*. Whilſt our land was covered with a deluge of perjury, rapine and blood, *the glory was departed from Iſrael*; our public reputation in the world vaniſhed; we looked like a people neglected by GOD; till he *breathed upon our ſlain*, and made *the dry bones live*.

6. His applying to Satan for advice, was that which gave the laſt blow to his government. *Saul died for his tranſgreſſion which he committed againſt the Lord, even againſt the word of the Lord, which he kept not; and alſo for aſking counſel of one that had a familiar ſpirit, to enquire of it; and enquired not of the Lord: therefore he ſlew him, and turned the kingdom unto David the ſon of Jeſſe* (*u*). It is hard indeed, to ſpeak of any people who go under the name of Chriſtians, and ſuppoſe that a ſtory ſo profane can belong to them! But, really, the application is fairer and more genuine than I could wiſh it. For, beſides their cries to departed ſaints, and the clumſy dealings they pretend to have with evil ſpirits, the meaſures they took to promote their cauſe were indeed a work of darkneſs. No treachery or blood could ſtop the career of their zeal. Inſtead of keeping up to the chriſtian rule, they ſunk too low for human nature: and whence could they have their aſſiſtance, but from beneath, where they got their cauſe? This is the language which the holy ſpirit gives of ſuch whoſe profeſſion breathes out cruelty, the people themſelves are called, *The ſynagogue of Satan* (*x*); and the ſuffering party are told who it is that heads the tumult, *the devil ſhall caſt ſome of you into*

(*t*) Zech. xii. 2, 3.
(*u*) 1 Chron. x. 13, 14.
(*x*) Rev. xi. 9.

into prison, and they shall have tribulation ten days (y). And they that bear their testimony for CHRIST in a superstitious place, are said to do it *in the city where Satan's seat is (z).*

These were some of the things that gave an effectual blast to *Saul*; and so, after he had gone his round of oppression and baseness, the GOD that lighted him up blew him out again; and he went away in a snuff. *I gave thee a King in my anger, and took him away in my wrath (a).*

II. *David*'s title fills up a large part of the history. His being *the King's son-in-law*, set him more to the view of the people, and gave them a resentment of his ill usage; but the scripture has mentioned several other things, as his right to the crown.

1. He was chosen by GOD himself: There is nothing can have a brighter evidence than this. The Apostle, who speaks of it so many ages after, refers it all to Providence. *After God had removed Saul, he raised up unto them David to be their King, to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, who shall fulfil all my will (b).* *Samuel* foretold it, and as an assurance of what was to be, they had it upon the credit of a great solemnity: he was *anointed in the midst of all his brethren:* and it is this that clenches the argument at their Revolution; *We are thy bone and thy flesh. And also in times past, when Saul was King, thou wast he that leddest out, and brought in Israel: and the Lord thy God said unto thee, Thou shalt save my people Israel, and be ruler over them (c).* So plain an election as this GOD has never promised to any other kingdom: it is confined to the Jewish history.

2. He

(y) Rev. xi. 10.
(z) Rev. xi. 13.
(a) Hos. xiii. 11.
(b) Acts xiii. 22.
(c) 1 Chron. xi. 2.

2. He had the unanimous call of the people. Several came to *Ziklag*, and others afterwards to *Hebron*. There was, indeed, a faction that had *Abner* a veteran soldier for their head; but these dwindled away; the general revolted, the pretender lost his life, and they that herded with him all their fair expectations.

3. His fitness for the work is very accurately laid down in the history. He is sometimes called *a man after God's own heart:* and when *Samuel* tells *Saul* of his forfeiture, he lets the sentence fall with the weight of this in it: *The Lord has rent the kingdom of Israel from thee, and given it to a neighbour of thine better than thou.* And indeed, without this it is in vain to say that rulers are of God's raising up, in any other sense than public calamities are.

4. To mention no more, he had been prepared for the tender part of the government by many adversities; it is upon this that they could say, *Lord, remember David and all his afflictions (d).* The public enemies of religion had almost *destroyed his life to the ground*, and a malignant party among themselves gave him an equal disturbance. Thus he was happily moulded by the difficulties that he met with, to a reign of universal clemency. These were all preparations for a throne. He was *taken from the sheepfolds, from following the ewes great with young, to feed Jacob and Israel; so he fed them according to the integrity of his heart, and guided them according to the skilfulness of his hands (e).* The troubles of his own life were of great advantage to soften him in the course of his government. This was so just and equal, that there is a threefold honour put upon it in scripture. He was a pattern to all his successors; for when any of them are commended, it is under this character, he *walked in the ways of David his father.* But more than that, the King and *ruler whose goings*

(*d*) Psalm cxxxii. 1. (*e*) Psalm lxxviii. 70, 71, 72.

forth have been of old from everlasting (*f*), takes a name from him; I mean our great Mediator. *I will set up a shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even David my servant; I the Lord will be their God, and my servant David a Prince among them* (*g*). And then in the last place; when the LORD revives his work in the latter days, such as he employs are to be thus qualified; *He that is feeble among them shall be as David, and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the Lord before them* (*h*).

You will easily imagine, that in turning over these characters I have a later example in mine eye; the NOBLE PRINCE who landed amongst us *this day*. GOD had *shewed him sore troubles*, and afterwards *enlarged his greatness and comfort on every side* (*i*). His bravery of soul was pent up for a time within a sphere of more private action. But, as it is said of *David*, when he was only a General, *Wherever he went he behaved himself wisely, so that his name was much set by* (*k*). Providence made him capable to stand the shock of many an assault in his younger life, that at last he might be fixed as a bank to stop the roring waves of tyranny. The early dangers that he met with were to temper his soul for a more copious service. After he had been the defence of his own country from a *French* deluge, he comes to rescue ours when verily *there was but a step between us and death.* The passions of stoutness and clemency, that are so remote from one another, mingled all their force in him; that he might answer both the offices of a King, a General *to fight our battles*, and a *nursing Father* to the welfare of his people. And what reason have we to admire the divine goodness that *turned the kingdom from Saul* to such an one? There is another part of the text, which my thoughts had their chief design upon, when I begun with

(*f*) Mic. v. 2.
(*g*) Ezek. xxxiv. 23, 24.
(*h*) Zech. xiii. 8.
(*i*) Psal. lxxi. 20.
(*k*) 1 Sam. xvii. 30.

with it; and that is, the conduct of Providence in these Revolutions; they are *according to the word of the Lord*. But I cannot proceed to these things, without giving you too much enlargement, or them too little; I will therefore venture upon another opportunity for that. What you have heard may close your attention, with a general remark or two upon it.

We see from these changes, that *God is King, he puts down one, and sets up another*. The wicked may *deal in proud wrath*, but he is above them. *Come and behold the works of the Lord, the desolations that he has made in the earth: he has broken the bow, and cut the spear asunder, and burnt the chariot in the fire* (*l*). We may justly say on *this day of good things, Be still, and know that he is God*. And then,

This may teach us what to do with our hopes of any new blessings; turn them into Prayer, and send them towards heaven. *The salvation of Israel* is not yet *come out of Sion*; but *the vision is for an appointed time; at the end it shall speak, and will not lie*. Our successes this year have not run so smooth as they did the former; we have had some rubs to a campaign that our hopes had magnified beforehand. But you see from whom we are to fetch the remains of victory. Let faith rise out of the disappointment. Bewail and plead together, as the Psalmist does: *Who will bring me into the strong city? Who will lead me into Edom? Wilt not thou, O God, who didst cast us off? And thou, O God, who didst not go forth with our armies* (*m*)*?* We have *this day* a sample of Almighty love; the liberties and peace that were restored at the great Revolution, tell us what God can do. The continuing mildness we are under at home, when the gains of war are so rich abroad, lets us see, that the mercies which began with the last reign did not end with it. He has so owned our settlement, as gives us the clearest evidence, that this *turn of the kingdom*

(*l*) Psal. xlvi. 8, 9. (*m*) Psal. lx. 9, 10.

from one to another, was *according to the word of the Lord.*

When the late King WILLIAM was called into his Master's joy, *Many were gathered together, that said, Let her be defiled, let our eye look upon Sion. But they know not the thoughts of the Lord, neither do they understand his counsel* (*n*). He has graciously given us another Sovereign upon the foot of the Revolution, and guided her by the same Spirit. This has been a reign of wonders in the field, and no less admirable for an union among ourselves. The devices that were set on foot to embroil us were happily crushed. GOD *has scattered the people that delight in war.* Let him have the glory of all our gratitude for what we have got, and of an unshaken dependence for what remains. I will say no more, when I have put the Psalmist's words into your mouths: *Thy God has commanded thy strength; strengthen, O God, that which thou hast wrought for us* (*o*).

(*n*) Mic. iv. 11. | (*o*) Psal. lxviii. 28.

SERMON

SERMON VIII.

The Divine Right of the Revolution.

Preached NOVEMBER 5, 1708.

1 CHRON. XII. 23.

These are the numbers of the bands, that were ready armed to the war, and came to David to Hebron, to turn the kingdom of Saul to him, according to the word of the Lord.

THE last year I told you these words belong to the history of a Revolution in *Israel*, and may be considered with an eye to ours, which begun by the favour of Heaven this day twenty years: there are two parts in the text; *First*, The design that those people came about to *Hebron*, and it was a cause worthy of their being armed; it deserved their drawing a sword: it was *to turn the kingdom from Saul to David*. *Secondly*, This is all *according to the word of the Lord*, i. e. either the birth of the many prophecies that he had given them; or it may signify, that what they did was by the peculiar direction of Heaven; and so the sense of the words lies in this plain observation:

Such Revolutions as make for the common peace, are *according to the word of the Lord.* They agree with his purpose, and fall under the conduct of his Providence.

The method I made choice of was,

I. To consider this Revolution among the tribes of *Israel.*

II. Show how these great and happy things are *according to the word of the Lord.*

The former of these, the turning the *kingdom from Saul to David*, had two branches; *Saul*'s abdication or forfeiture, and *David*'s title.

Under the first, I run through the several parts of his mal-administration, and shewed to what it is that the scriptures impute the rending the kingdom from him, and giving it to another. Though, when he was called *the Lord's anointed*, it signified no less than his being the very man whom God had chosen by name. An honour confined to those people, and what none else can pretend to, without an impudence that deserves to be laughed at rather than argued with. And yet this man, who had an undoubted grant of the kingdom by Heaven itself, is rejected from being a ruler, and another chosen.

David's title was a divine appointment, and a popular concurrence; the tribes *came to Hebron to turn the kingdom from Saul to him*; and this is said to be *according to the word of the Lord*, which is

The second part of the text. I have already given you two things as the sense of this expression, and shall now consider it at large with an eye to them both.

First, That such Revolutions fall in with his design: And,

Secondly,

Secondly, That they are supported by the blessing of his Providence.

1. The rending of the kingdom from those that have abused their trust, and putting it into better hands, is not only the right of human nature, but it is *according to the word of the Lord*, and answers the designs that he has published. This has been the course of his Providence in all ages. *Ask thy father, and he will shew thee; thine elders, and they will tell thee.* It is an observation as old as *Job*'s days, *He shall break in pieces mighty men without number, and set others in their stead* (*a*). And lest we should think this only means their dying, he goes on to shew us, that a visible justice is acted upon them; *He strikes them as wicked men in the open sight of others* (*b*). And this is with regard to those, who are under their yoke; *The hypocrite shall not reign, lest the people be ensnared* (*c*). God spoke his mind at large to the *Jews* upon this head. He had ordered them a long while before-hand, if they would have a King, to make them *like other nations*, he must have *a copy of the law before him, lest his heart should be lifted up above his brethren, and turn aside from the commandment; to the end that he might prolong his days in his kingdom, he and his children in the midst of Israel* (*d*). This was the condition of the government: for, as here is the promise of an enduring honour to him and his race, whilst these rules of empire were sacred to him, so the reverse to it must be understood in the case of his rebellion against God, and his tyranny over the people. When they hurried on to have a King, *Samuel* tells them on the coronation-day, *if they still do wickedly, both he and they shall be destroyed* (*e*). From these general hints they had warning enough, and the schemes of government laid down before them; but

(*a*) Job xxxiv. 24.
(*b*) Job xxxiv. 26.
(*c*) Job xxxiv. 30.
(*d*) Deut. xvii 20.
(*e*) 1 Sam. xii. *ult.*

the caſe is ſtill plainer, when he comes by divine order to confront *Saul* at the head of his army: *Thy kingdom ſhall not continue; the Lord has ſought him a man after his own heart, and commanded him to be captain over his people, becauſe thou haſt not kept the word which the Lord commanded thee* (*f*). This he repeats upon the occaſion of another crime, *The Lord has rent the kingdom of Iſrael from thee this day, and given it to a neighbour of thine, that is better than thou* (*g*). In both thoſe places, the prophet argues from *Saul*'s being unqualified; and grounds the Revolution that ſhould happen among them upon the general advantage of that change. After this, when *David* was anointed, that all *Iſrael* might know it, the *ſpirit of the Lord came upon him from that day forward.* This was ſuch a diſcovery of GOD's mind, that *Saul* himſelf owns it under a violent impreſſion. *I know that thou ſhalt ſurely be King, and that the kingdom of Iſrael ſhall be eſtabliſhed in thy hand.* *Abner* falls in with the argument, *The Lord hath ſpoken, ſaying, By the hand of my ſervant David will I ſave my people* (*h*).

Indeed theſe are things that we have no immediate concern with; it cannot be ſaid of any now, that they are governors *according to the word of the Lord*, if you take the expreſſion in this ſtricter ſenſe. He no further names the perſons in our age, than as his Providence gives them a fitneſs for the work, and an endearment to the people. But yet ſuch Revolutions may be ſaid to be *according to the word of the Lord*, as they fall in with thoſe deſigns, that he has told us, are very dear to him.

1. The reforming of his worſhip.
2. Reſtoring the rights of human nature.
3. Making

(*f*) 1 Sam. xiii. 14.
(*g*) 1 Sam. xv. 28.
(*h*) 2 Sam. iii. 18.

3. Making inquisition for the blood of his people.
4. The advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom.

1. It is certainly *according to the word of the Lord*, that all the abominations which have run into his worship shall be taken away; *we have a sure word of prophecy* to tell us *the things which will shortly come to pass*. We have lived to see what the Apostle spoke of in his day, that *the man of sin, the son of perdition, should be revealed, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God, so that he as God sits in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God* (*i*). *The mystery of iniquity* has been working for a long time: and we know, that *that wicked one shall be consumed by our Lord with the spirit of his mouth, and destroyed with the brightness of his coming* (*k*). There is a day, when he will take his *fan into his hand, and throughly purge his floor* (*l*). Whatever unconcern there may now be upon the churches, yet the time will come when they who are *written among the living in Jerusalem* shall be *jealous for the Lord of Hosts*. *We, according to his promise, look for a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwells righteousness*; the brightest Reformation that ever yet was seen; when a zeal for God's ordinances in their purity will swallow up all carnal affections; according to that prophecy, *It shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of Hosts, that I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land, and they shall no more be remembered: also I will cause the prophets and the unclean spirits to pass out of the land; and it shall come to pass, when any shall yet prophesy, that his father and his mother that begat him, shall say unto him, Thou shalt not live, for thou speakest lies in the name of the Lord; and his father and his mother that begat him, shall thrust him through when he prophesies* (*m*).

The

(*i*) 2 Thess. ii. 3, 4.
(*k*) 2 Thess. ii. 8.
(*l*) Matt. iii. 12.
(*m*) Zech. xiii. 2, 3.

The wisdom that descends from above, as it came out of CHRIST's hands, was *pure and peaceable*; and with this native simplicity it run through the kingdoms of the earth: it is represented as *a stone cut out without hands* (*n*); there was no human art to give it a beauty, or make its way more prosperous; and yet *it breaks to pieces the image of iron, clay, brass, silver and gold.* The powers of this world are so little able to stand before it, that they become *like the chaff of the summer threshing-floor*; *and the stone that smote the image was a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.* Thus it was that Christianity inlarged itself at first, *not by might nor by force*; *but by the spirit of the Lord of Hosts.* But when *the beauty of holiness* decayed, people endeavoured to supply what was gone, by dressing it up to the luxury and pride of men; till at length, instead of a gospel and a worship that are *the power of God*, we had it new modeled; it was only the creature of human prudence. And what confusion has this made in the world? First, They refined upon the institutions of Heaven, and then established their own amendments with as much terror as they could. That order has stood a long time, *That whoever will not worship the image of the beast, shall be killed. And he causeth all, both rich and poor, small and great, free and bond, to receive a mark on their right hand or their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that has the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name* (*o*). These were things foretold by the Apostles, it begun in their day. There would be *false teachers who privily brought in damnable heresies, denying the Lord that bought them, and bringing upon themselves swift destruction. Many should follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of truth would be evil spoken of, and through covetousness, with feigned words, they*

(*n*) Dan. xi. 34, 36. | (*o*) Rev. xiii. 15, 16, 17.

they would make merchandize of the people (*p*). That church of *Ephesus* in particular, where St. *Paul for the space of three years declared to them the whole counsel of God*, was to have *grievous wolves enter in among them:* nay, *of themselves should men arise, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them* (*q*). But when *the day of the Lord* comes, it is over and over again called, *The vengeance of his temple* (*r*). He will *turn to the people a pure language, that they may call upon the name of the Lord, and serve him with one consent* (*s*). We know, that the *mother of abominations* shall come down, that *the Heavens, and the Apostles, and Prophets* may *rejoice over her.* The nations of the earth shall have day-light to set them at liberty from the superstitions that they are fallen into. These are things *according to the word of the Lord.* And

This is one of the blessings that came with our Revolution. As the time was hastning that *the Kings of the earth should hate the whore, and make her desolate; God put it into their hearts to fulfil his will* (*t*). *England* had made an admirable stand in the general Reformation, under the short reign of that excellent Price *Edward* VI. *in whom there was so* many *good things towards the Lord God of Israel, in the house of Jeroboam.* After that Queen *Mary* over-run the work with blood and ravage, the men who had done so famously by *the word of their testimony*, came to plead another way, by *not loving their lives unto the death. For the elects sake those days were shortned. The bloody and deceitful did not live out half their days*; and in a little time *the indignation was over-past.* But, in many respects *the glory of the second house* was not equal to *that of the first.* From that time, they have been making their secret encroachments upon us, as

(*p*) 2 Peter ii. 1, 2, 3.
(*q*) Acts xx. 29, 30.
(*r*) Jer. l. 28. and li. 16.
(*s*) Zeph. iii. 8.
(*t*) Rev. xvii. 16, 17.

as if they would bring us to that by degrees, which could not be propoſed without danger all at once. They took up with lower conqueſts for a while, pleaſing themſelves that we had got a ſmattering of their ſuperſtition, when we ſpoke *half the language of Aſhdod, and half that of Canaan.* Calling *miniſters of the goſpel* by the name of prieſts, *the Lord's table* an altar, and *the communion of the body of Chriſt* a ſacrifice. This is a perverting the phraſes from what the New Teſtament means by them. *Whilſt we ſlept, an enemy ſowed tares* (*u*).

They carried on *the myſtery of iniquity* through ſeveral reigns, and were at laſt ſo powerful as to get a furious champion of their cauſe upon the throne. We were then in the worſt condition of *leproſy*, and muſt cry out *utterly unclean, when the plague was in the head* (*x*). But *God had pity on his great name*, which we had *profaned*, and once more reſcued our religion from *the pride of men, and the ſtrife of tongues.* This was one thing ſaved at the Revolution, and it is *according to the word of the Lord*, as it falls in with a deſign that we ſo often read of in ſcripture. We are told that the time will come, when nothing that belongs to idolatry ſhall ſtay behind. All the terms and ways of expreſſing ourſelves that we have got from a ſuperſtitious crew, muſt be ſent to the place whence they came. *I will cut off*, ſaith he, *the remnant of Baal from this place, with the names of the Chemarim and prieſts* (*y*). We are no longer to talk like them. *In that day thou ſhalt call me Iſhi, i. e.* my huſband; *thou ſhalt no more call me Baal* (*z*), which ſignifies my Lord; *becauſe I will take away the names of Baalim out of her mouth, and they ſhall no more be remembered by their name.*

2. It is *according to the word of the Lord*, that the rights of human nature ſhall be eſtabliſhed, *to cruſh under his feet all the priſoners of the earth; to turn aſide*

(*u*) Matt. xiii. 25.
(*x*) Lev. xiii. 44.
(*y*) Zeph i. 4.
(*z*) Hoſea ii. 16, 17.

aside the right of a man before the face of the most High, to subvert a man in his cause the Lord approveth not (*a*). It is pity the doctrines of slavery should be promoted under the Christian name, when there is nothing wider from the design of our LORD's coming into the world, and the rules that he has left for his people to walk by. What can be more absurd and cruel than to tell us, that he who came to deliver us from Satan, has made it essential to our peace with him, that we submit to all the excesses of tyranny. It is a *reasonable service* that we are called to, as it includes our behaviour both to GOD and man. There is nothing in it that nature itself will start at when it is well informed. But if this is a truth, that a set of people have a divine right to our obedience, and *to resist them is damnation*, when they are going on with a notorious injustice, we must by no means say, that *the yoke of* CHRIST is an *easy* one.

There is nothing in reason to persuade me that my life is another's property, and am I brought into this misery by the Gospel? Our LORD *came not to destroy mens lives, but to save them*; and are his rules so much a discord to himself? I know two or three sentences in the thirteenth chapter to the *Romans* come under a yearly execution by some that *walk in craftiness, and handle the word of the Lord deceitfully*. But it is plain the Apostle could never say, that a tyrant is *an ordinance of* GOD, in any other sense than our afflictions are; the Prophet indeed has told us, that *God has ordained them for judgment, and established them for correction* (*b*). But if that is all, they are no more *jure divino* than a distemper is; and we may apply to the rational methods of cure in one case as well as the other. The reason that he gives for our obedience, strikes off so wild an opinion as this; that *they are not terrors to good works, but to the evil: Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? If thou dost that which is good,*

(*a*) Lam. iii. 34—36. (*b*) Hab. i. 12.

good, thou ſhalt have praiſe of the ſame. He is the Miniſter of God to thee for good; but if thou doſt evil, be afraid, for he bears not the ſword in vain. He is the Miniſter of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that does evil (*c*). Yet this text that ſhows us the juſt meaſures of our ſubmiſſion has been abuſed by the ſlight of men, to make rulers above law, and ſubjects beneath it.

Is this doing the work of an Evangeliſt, and making full proof of their Miniſtry? Are theſe men *preaching up repentance and remiſſion of ſins in the name of Chriſt?* Can ſuch *hard ſayings* belong to *the glad tidings of great joy that ſhall be to all people?* That which our LORD called the Goſpel, was to *preach deliverance to the captives, and the opening of the priſon doors to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort them that mourn in Sion* (*d*); and it is pity that they who pretend to have his name upon them, ſhould have no doctrines ſo much at heart as thoſe for the enſlaving of mankind. It was a ſad part of *Jeruſalem*'s miſery, *Thy prophets have ſeen vain and fooliſh things for thee, and they have not diſcovered thy iniquity, to turn away thy captivity, but have ſeen for thee falſe burdens, and cauſes of baniſhment* (*e*). Now when a people fall in with thoſe meaſures that make for the reſcue of their liberty, it is *according to the word of the Lord.* We have promiſes upon record, and GOD will *eſtabliſh his word unto his ſervants*, that there ſhall be *no hurting nor deſtroying in all his holy mountain* (*f*). When *the high-way of holineſs* comes to be opened, *the unclean are not to paſs over it.* It will be ſo plain and eaſy, that *no lion ſhall be there, no ravenous bird go up thereon* (*g*). And this we underſtood at the Revolution. There was a conteſt whether we ſhould be governed

(*c*) Rom. xiii. 3, 4.
(*d*) Iſai. lxi. 1, 2.
(*e*) Lam. ii. 14.
(*f*) Zeph. iii. 1.
(*g*) Iſai. xxxv. 8, 9.

verned by the King or by the Law; and when it was brought to this, that *no man could ſerve* thoſe *two maſters*, we turned out the one, and kept in the other.

3. It is *according to the word of the Lord*, that there ſhall be *an inquiſition for the blood that is ſhed. God is jealous and revengeth, he is furious and takes vengeance on his adverſaries, and reſerveth wrath for his enemies. The Lord is* indeed *ſlow to anger*; but *he is great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked: he has his way in the whirlwind and in the ſtorm, and the clouds are the duſt of his feet* (*h*). *Saul's killing the prieſts of the Lord*, and his eager purſuit of *David*, came heavy upon him at laſt, when *his ſhield is vilely caſt away* upon the mountains of *Gilboa*, and *the beauty of Iſrael was ſlain upon the high places* of the uncircumciſed (*i*). God ſuffers a tyrant to go on *frowardly in the way of his heart* for ſome time, but they that *ſhewed no mercy, ſhall have judgment without mercy* (*k*). There is *a cup in the Lord's right hand, and the wicked ſhall wring out the dregs of it* (*l*). There is to be a reckoning for all *the blood of his ſervants that is ſhed.* The ſouls of them that were *ſlain for the word of God, and the teſtimony they held*, are received *under the altar*, and are pleading there, *How long, O Lord, holy and true, doſt thou not judge and avenge our blood upon them that dwell on the earth?* It is obſerved, that *white robes were given to every one of them*, and it was *ſaid unto them, that they ſhould reſt for a little ſeaſon, till their fellow-ſervants alſo and brethren that ſhould be killed as they were, ſhould be fulfilled* (*m*). And when this is over, we read of *the Kings of the earth and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains fleeing to the dens and rocks of the mountains, becauſe the great day of the Lamb's wrath was come.*

There

(*h*) Nah. i. 2, 3.
(*i*) 2 Sam. i. 19, 20.
(*k*) Jam. ii. 13.
(*l*) Pſal. lxxv. 8.
(*m*) Rev. vi. 9—11.

There are the materials of a long quarrel with *Babylon*, becauſe *in her was found the blood of the Prophets and Saints, and of all that dwell upon the earth* (*n*). I need not go far back into our hiſtory to tell you what violent meaſures have been carried on to ſink our Religion and Liberties. It is within the memory of ſeveral yet alive, that near two hundred thouſand innocent people fell in the year 1641, in that hideous maſſacre of *Ireland* *. And it is ſtill freſher, if I put you in mind of the woful perſecutions in *Great Britain:* how many families were ruined? Some ſtarved in jails, others driven into *dens and mountains of the earth, of whom the world was not worthy*; tho' *the Lord God of gods he knows, and Iſrael he ſhall know, that it was not for any rebellion or tranſgreſſion againſt the Lord.* Swearing ſome great men out of their lives; poiſoning, ſtabbing and cutting the throats of others; the garbling of corporations, the packing of juries, were ſome of the ſteps for a general conqueſt over us. And when things were ripe enough, we had a ſtanding army in the time of peace; and moſt of theſe forces under the command of *Iriſh* Papiſts, in open defiance of the law. But theſe people were the beſt uſed to Proteſtant blood, and ſo the more prepared for another ſlaughter. Though *this turning of things upſide down was eſteemed as potters clay*; in a little time, *the terrible one was brought to nought, the ſcorner conſumed, and they that watch for iniquity, cut off* (*o*).

Ahab, when he had got *Naboth*'s life and vineyard, was eaſy enough for ſome time; but the Prophet *found* him, *Haſt thou ſlain, and haſt thou taken poſſeſſion? In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth, ſhall dogs lick thy blood, even thine* (*p*). From that moment the decree commences, and the execution

(*n*) Rev. xviii. 24.
(*o*) Iſai. xxix. 16, 20.
(*p*) 1 Kings xxi. 19.

* See Dr *Lambert*'s Sermon preached before the Proteſtant nobility and gentry of that kingdom, at St *James*'s, *Oct.* 23, 1708.

tion comes at several times. For when *Jehu* had slain his son, he says to *Bidkar* his Captain, *Cast him into the portion of the field of Naboth; for remember, how when thou and I rode together after Ahab his father, the Lord laid this burden upon him. Surely, I have seen yesterday the blood of Naboth, and the blood of his sons, saith the Lord, and I will requite thee in this plat of ground* (*q*). It is a maxim that is laid down in Scripture, and founded upon everlasting morality, *Ye shall take no satisfaction for the life of a murderer that is guilty of death, he shall surely be put to death. Ye shall not pollute the land wherein ye dwell: for blood it defiles the land: and the land cannot be cleansed from the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it* (*r*). If this is neglected by men, Providence takes up the quarrel, and sometimes *lays up the iniquity of fathers for their children.* We read in some cases, when the satisfaction of public justice is deferred, it has only fallen heavier at last. *Joab* the son of *Zeruiah* had *shed the blood of war in peace*; but he was useful to the Revolution; and *David, though anointed King, found his hands too weak:* however it is left as a death-bed charge to *Solomon*, that his *hoary hairs should not come down to the grave in peace.* And his rebellion in favour of *Adonijah*, lets in the long-designed misery. This is what we are waiting for, in the present confusion of war, that when *the cities of the nations are falling, great Babylon* may *come in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath* (*s*).

4. We know that the Gospel is to have a free course, and be glorified, and the kingdom shall be the LORD's: *From the rising of the sun, to the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles* (*t*). *The earth shall be full of the knowledge of*

(*q*) 2 Kings ix. 25, 26.
(*r*) Numb. xxxv. 31, 33.
(*s*) Rev. xvi. 19.
(*t*) Mal. i. 11.

the Lord, as the waters cover the sea (*u*). *The kingdoms of this world are to become the kingdoms of the Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever. He will take to him his great power and reign.* The time shall come, that he will *give reward unto his servants the Prophets, and to his Saints, and to them that fear his name, small and great, and will destroy them that destroy the earth* (*x*). He is to have *the Heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession; to break them with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel* (*y*.) Now whatever falls in with this design, must be *according to the word of the Lord.* And what can do it more than a Revolution that baffles Popery and Tyranny? For these two are the things that *have let, and will let, till they be taken out of the way* (*z*). I know those people pretend to vast expences for spreading the Gospel in foreign parts; but it is only as the *Pharisees compassed sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he is made,* says our LORD, *he is twofold more a child of hell than themselves* (*a*).

This party has notoriously hindred both the salvation of *Israel*, and the fulness of the Gentiles, by the stumbling-block of their iniquity. I will give you an instance of each: in the year 1666, there was a general expectation, that it was the time when the *Jews* would be converted in a body: and there were some hopeful steps towards it; for men of the brightest figure among them, both for learning and riches, met from all parts of the world, and had a free conference about *him whom their fathers had pierced.* The great question was, *whether the same* JESUS *of Nazareth, whom they crucified, was now made both* LORD *and* CHRIST? The argument was managed with

(*u*) Isai. xi. 9.
(*x*) Rev. xi. 15, 17, 18.
(*y*) Psal. ii. 8, 9.
(*z*) 2 Thess ii. 7.
(*a*) Matt. xxiii. 15.

with a great deal of temper among themſelves: and ſeveral of them pleaded our cauſe with that ſtrength of reaſon, and thoſe forcible quotations of the Prophets, that it was verily thought the majority would have *received the love of the truth.* But when *the children were come to the birth, there was not ſtrength to bring forth.* The *Romiſh* prieſts, who pretended to ſtand there as the *ſervants of the Lord Jeſus*, proved only ſo to *their own bellies.* They flung in the doctrines of the Pope's ſupremacy and tranſubſtantiation; and laid before them all the parts of a ridiculous ſuperſtition; and ſo ſent away the poor wretches more hardned than they came. And well they might, when Chriſtianity appeared ſo ill to them, to be made up of principles that contradict their ſenſes, a diſcipline that only contrives to exalt the pride of *Rome*, and a worſhip that deals with thoſe little fopperies that human nature would be aſhamed of.

They had a ſtrange way of converting the *Moors*, baptizing them firſt in water, and then in their own blood. And, indeed, ſuch a vein of cruelty has run through their ſchemes, that their taking upon them the chriſtian name, is enough to make it ſcandalous. Our Revolution begun to break off this yoke, and put us into the way of aſſerting the empire of CHRIST over the conſciences of men. This is not only the great doctrine of the Proteſtants, but, indeed, of the Bible, that we ought to *call no man maſter. Ye are redeemed with a price; be ye not the ſervants of men (b).*

2. This being *according to the word of the Lord*, may ſignify that the deſign was carried on under the favour of his Providence. This was ſo remarkable in the caſe of the *Jews*, as they came out of *Babylon*, that when *the enemies about them ſaw theſe things they were much caſt down in their own eyes; for they perceived this work was wrought of God (c).* There are

(b) 1 Cor. vii. 23. (c) Neh. vi. 16.

thoſe lines of divinity in ſuch Revolutions as proclaim themſelves. *When the Lord turned again the captivity of Sion, they ſaid, among the heathen, He has done great things for them* (*d*). There is a twofold glory that he ſecures to himſelf this way.

1. In an awful juſtice over his enemies.
2. A ſeaſonable mercy to his people.

I. His juſtice in ſuch a Providence gives a recompence to what is paſt, and warning for the time to come.

1. It is the day of *the Lord's recompence.* He is *known by the judgment that he executes*, when *the wicked are ſnared in the work of their own hands* (*e*). He lets them ſee the vanity of what they uſed to be ſo pleaſed with. People confuſe them with flattery, and then leave them in the ſnare whither they had brought them. We cannot ſuppoſe that *Saul* wanted his dependents, who told him that their lives and fortunes were at his ſervice, if we may put it into the modern language; and yet, when he dies he has never an *Iſraelite* near him beſides his own armour-bearer. This is the uſual round, for people to make a noiſe of their loyalty, and when they have infatuated the man that believes them, then they leave him to ſhift for himſelf, and reſolve to have no part in the hazard that their deceit has led him to. But the juſtice of God is ſeen in this: *It is a righteous thing with him*, that they who depend ſo much upon the vows and devotion of men, as to neglect plain duty, ſhould find that they lean only on *a broken reed*, that inſtead of bearing them up, will cut them in pieces. *Let not him that is deceived truſt in vanity, for vanity ſhall be recompenſed* (*f*).

2. I

(*d*) Pſalm cxxvi. 1, 2.
(*e*) Pſalm ix. 16.
(*f*) Job xv. 31.

2. It is a warning to others; and if they do not take it, themſelves are like to go the deeper in miſery. *Belſhazzar* was the ſon, or the grand-ſon of a King, who had ſtrained his authority ſo far, that he was turned both out of the government and human ſociety too. From a brute on the throne he is made one in the field. This was ſo awful a Providence, that to neglect it is a defying of Heaven to do ſomething worſe: and therefore when the ſon is ſo debauched as to *drink with his wives and concubines, and a thouſand of his Lords*; and ſo profane as to do it in *the veſſels of the temple*, *Daniel* argues with him. *The moſt high God gave thy father Nebuchadnezzar a kingdom, and majeſty, and glory, and honour: And for the majeſty that he gave him, all the people, nations and languages trembled and feared before him; whom he would he ſlew, and whom he would he kept alive; whom he would he ſet up, and whom he would he pulled down. But when his heart was lifted up, and his mind hardned in pride, he was depoſed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him. And thou, his ſon, O Belſhazzar, haſt not humbled thine heart, though thou kneweſt all this* (*g*). And what was the iſſue of this daring impenitency, but a greater adverſity to himſelf? *Thou art weighed in the balance and found wanting: thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Perſians* (*h*). And the tragedy begun both early and roughly with him, *that night was Belſhazzar the King of the Chaldeans ſlain.*

II. It is in mercy to an oppreſſed people.

1. By letting them ſee, that they are yet in God's hand. When *the foundations are out of courſe, what can the righteous do?* Their only relief is, that *the Lord is in his holy temple, and that the Lord's throne is in the Heavens* (*i*). It is with a recoil of hope,

(*g*) Daniel v. 18—22.
(*h*) Daniel v. 27, 28.
(*i*) Pſalm xi. 3, 4.

that we can dare to believe he is among us in an evil day. As *Gideon* says to the *Angel*, *O my Lord, if the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us? And where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of* (*k*)? But when he raises up a *Saviour, and a Great One*, it is like his *returning to the many thousands of Israel*: as it proved in *Gideon*'s case, which methinks was not unlike ours. *The Lord looked upon him, and said to him, Go in this thy might, and save Israel.* Had there not been something of a Revolution-spirit left in *Great Britain*, we might have thought, that he had *cast us off for ever, and his anger smoked against the sheep of his pasture*; *We see not our signs and wonders, nor is there any among us that knows how long* (*l*). It would have been sad indeed, if the things that were so dear to former generations, their Religion and Civil Rights, should then have *perished, and no man laid it to heart.* But *the Lord awaked as one out of sleep, and put his enemies to a perpetual reproach* (*m*).

2. By stirring them up to assert their just liberties. When *the Lord hath cast out thine enemy, in that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear not*; *and to Sion, Let not thy hands be slack* (*n*). Conscience and courage were each of them shackled for some time. People thought it well enough if themselves could save any thing, whatever desolation came upon the public. But surely, there must be a day when a nation shall be weary of her chains, and suffer the infatuation no longer. Some way or other Providence will bring a contempt upon those nations that have made gods of brutes, and brutes of men. It is a strange way of dividing a kingdom, that some among them must be beasts of prey, and the rest beasts of burden. This is a doctrine that will jade itself when it comes to be used. When people talk of passive obedience, and

(*k*) Judges vi. 13.
(*l*) Psalm lxxiv. 1, 9.
(*m*) Psalm lxxviii. 66.
(*n*) Zeph. iii. 15, 16.

and quiet sufferings, they never mean their own. It is a duty only for others; for when it comes to themselves, they cannot endure to practise upon what they have taught. *They bind heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne, and lay them on other mens shoulders; but themselves will not move them with one of their fingers* (*o*). We can remember enough of this hypocrisy. The men that gave our unhappy Prince a right to fill the jails, and dip his foot in noble blood, to mould our charters anew, and have an army under his command, yet these think his breaking the laws of a College, worthy an invitation to a foreign Prince. Thus it was with *Abner*, he knew that *David* was chosen by the LORD himself to be head over *Israel*, a long while before he pleaded it: but he asserts the right of descent in favour of *Saul*'s son; till that pretender and he fell out about his debauchery, and then he is as loud and full of the prophecies as any. *So do God to Abner, and more also, except as the Lord has sworn to David, even so I do to him, to translate the kingdom from the house of Saul, and to set up the throne of David over Israel and over Judah, from Dan even to Beersheba* (*p*). Thus GOD will find out proper ways to engage a people in defence of those liberties that can never be fairly lost.

3. By uniting them in this common blessing. It was the artifice of some mercenary pens to divide us among ourselves, that whilst we were *biting and devouring one another*, we might be *consumed one of another*. *Ephraim* used *to envy Judah, and Judah to vex Ephraim*; but they could *fly together upon the shoulders of the Philistines, and lay their hand upon Edom and Moab* (*q*). We read of several animosities among the tribes; *Benjamin* quarreled with all the rest; *Gilead* with *Ephraim*; *for the divisions of Reuben there were great searchings of heart* (*r*): but it looks

(*o*) Matth. xxiii. 4.
(*p*) 2 Sam. iii. 9, 10.
(*q*) Isa xi. 13, 14.
(*r*) Judges v. 15.

like his doing, who has *the hearts of men in his hand*, when all disputes are hushed, and there is no contention but for the general peace. All private jars were laid aside; they did not so much heed the interest of a tribe, as that of the whole nation. *Praise ye the Lord in the congregation*, saith *David*, *even the Lord from the fountain of Israel*, *q. d.* They are now as much united as if they all flowed in one channel. *There is little Benjamin, with their ruler; the Princes of Judah and their council; the Princes of Zebulun; and the Princes of Naphtali: Thy God commands thy strength* (*s*).

In this chapter you have an account of the people that revolted to *David:* it begins in the court; some that had been advanced in the former reign, draw off to meet the new Prince upon his coming. *Of the children of Benjamin, of the kindred of Saul, three thousand, for hitherto the greatest part of them had kept the ward of Saul* (*t*). We meet with persons of various capacities among them. The *Gadites* were *men of might and men of war, that could handle shield and buckler, whose faces were like the faces of lions, and they were as swift as the roes upon the mountains* (*u*). *Of the children of Issachar, that had understanding of the times, and knew what Israel ought to do, two hundred; and all their brethren were at their commandment* (*x*). *Of Zebulun, such as could keep rank, and were not of a double heart* (*y*). These have a solemn interview with him, which I cannot read, without thinking over the case of our late King at his landing. His small number had a daily increase, and he so behaved himself in that affair, as if this chapter was both an history for *Israel*, and a prophecy for us. *David went out to them to meet them, and said, If you be come peaceably to help me, my heart shall be knit unto you:*

(*s*) Psalm lxviii. 26, 27, 28.
(*t*) 1 Chron. xii. 29.
(*u*) 1 Chron. xii. 31.
(*x*) 1 Chron. xii. 32.
(*y*) 1 Chron. xii. 33.

you: but if you be come to betray me to mine enemies, seeing there is no evil in mine hand, the God of our fathers look thereon, and rebuke it. Then came the Spirit upon Amasai, who was the chief of the Captains, and he said, Thine are we David, and on thy side thou son of Jesse. Peace, peace, be unto thee, and peace be to thy helpers; for thy God helpeth thee. GOD inspired them with a general sense of their danger; so that *at that time, day by day, they came to David to help him, until it was a great host like the host of God* (z).

4. By putting them under a better government. There is a particular reputation upon the clemency of his reign; *he fed them according to the integrity of his heart, and guided them by the skilfulness of his hands* (a). We read how general a satisfaction the people had. So many thousands were with *David three days eating and drinking; for their brethren had prepared for them. Moreover, they that were nigh them, even Issachar, Zebulun and Naphtali, brought bread on asses and camels, and mules, and oxen, and sheep, and meat, and meal, cakes of figs, and bunches of raisins, and wine and oil, and oxen and sheep in abundance; for there was joy in Israel* (b). They now fell under the care of one who had fought their battles, and shewn a tenderness for them upon all occasions. Here was an happy turn to Religion among them. *David said to the congregation of Israel, If it seem good to you, and that it be of the Lord our God, let us send abroad to our brethren every where, that are left in the land of Israel, and with them also to the Priests and Levites, which are in their cities and suburbs, that they may gather themselves unto us; and let us bring again the ark of our God to us: for we enquired not at it in the days of Saul. And all the congregation said, that they would do so: for the thing*

(z) 1 Chron. xii. 17, 18, 22.
(a) Psal. lxxviii. 72.
(b) 1 Chron. xii. 40.

thing was right in the eyes of all the people (*c*). This was a Revolution worthy of their joy, when there was such a mutual tenderness between King and people. They move together in things of the best design.

This gives me a fair occasion to look back upon the mercies that landed in *England*, with our great DELIVERER *this day*. All these things that make up the sense of my text, may be brought over to that case. It was eminently *according to the word of the Lord*, that *a* SAVIOUR should come *upon mount Sion, and judge the mount of Esau* (*d*). We had sold ourselves into the hands of *a cruel Lord*, and had the judgment of *a fierce King* ruling over us. Our abominable wrangling about lesser matters made us at first the sport of the Papists, and then their prey. We were in the same case with *Isaac*, forced to travel a long while *carrying wood and fire*, not knowing that ourselves were to be *the burnt-offering*. May *Jehovah-jireh* be inscribed upon *this day*; when we were bound and stretched out, there was an angel to catch the blow, that would have been as much against nature as *Abraham*'s: for they that called themselves Fathers of their country were to be the executioners of this wo. Was not this *the Lord's doing?* Then,

First, Let us resolve that he shall have the glory. Indeed the names of those men will be very dear to our last history, *who jeoparded their lives in the high-places of the field*, and were resolved that either Religion should live with them, or they would die with it. But still the chief praise is owing to heaven. *Deborah* admires the courage of the nobility, and the unanimity of the commons, but it is with an entire reference of the whole design to GOD. *My heart is towards the governors of Israel, who willingly offered themselves among the people: Praise ye the Lord* (*e*).

Secondly,

(*c*) 1 Chron. xiii. 2, 3, 4.
(*d*) Obad. i. 21.
(*e*) Judg. v. 9.

Secondly, Another improvement that we ſhould make of GOD's hand in it, is to deſire that he who *laid the foundation* would build upon it: and when he brings *the top-ſtone*, the cry of a reſcued people will be *Grace, grace. He will perfect that which concerns us.* It is not his way to lead out of *Egypt, and ſlay in the wilderneſs.* Though there is a generation that were lately *making themſelves a Captain, and returning to their bondage*; yet we are thus far preſerved. We have ſeen an impudent Invaſion blaſted with a contempt of Providence, though it was a deſign laboured with all the force of the enemy. There were ſevere days of faſting in *Ireland*, and the occaſion kept very private, till the fleet came out of *Dunkirk*, but then they told their hopes with the ſame confidence that the *French* King did his in all the courts where he had an ambaſſador. *Rome* was to help it with money and a bleſſing; *France* with ſhips and ſoldiers: and what did the mighty preparation come to? It brings to my mind what you read in the Prophet, *Why are thy valiant men ſwept away? They ſtood not, becauſe the Lord did drive them. They did cry there, Pharaoh King of Egypt is but a noiſe, he has paſt the time appointed* (*f*).

Thirdly, Let us walk as a people thus *near to the Lord*, with a religious taſte of the bleſſings we enjoy, and an humble contention for thoſe we want. Thus ſhall *violence be no more heard in our land, nor waſting and deſtruction in our borders*; but we ſhall *call our walls ſalvation, and our gates praiſe* (*g*). *Above all, let us put on charity, which is the bond of perfectneſs.* Do not ſuffer the deſign to take of widening the difference between Proteſtants, *but follow the things that make for peace.* Avoid them who have *the inſtruments of cruelty in their habitation*, and pretend to help Religion by the ruin of ſuch as do not agree to their model.

(*f*) Jer. xlvi. 15, 17. (*g*) Iſai. lx. 18.

model. *Oh my soul! come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united; for in their anger they would slay a man, and in their self-will would dig down a wall.* We have many promises upon record, let us *hope and quietly wait for the salvation of our God*, till he has made *Sion an eternal excellency, the joy of many generations* (*b*).

(*b*) Isa. lx. 15.

SERMON

SERMON IX.

The Son of TABEAL.

Occasioned by the *French* Invasion in Favour of the PRETENDER.

Preached MARCH 14, 1707-8.

ISAIAH VII. 5, 6, 7.

Because Syria, Ephraim, and the son of Remaliah have taken evil counsel against thee, saying, Let us go up against Judah, and vex it, and let us make a breach therein for us, and set a King in the midst of it, even the son of Tabeal: Thus saith the Lord God, It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass.

SOmetimes GOD speaks so loud in Providence as to call our meditations after him. *The lion has rored, who will not fear? The Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy* (*a*)? When he *answers* a people *by terrible things in righteousness* (*b*), it is not merely to set us a gazing, but to make Religion circulate in our hearts and lives. There is an adoration in every true regard that we have to his proceedings.

To

(*a*) Amos iii. 8. (*b*) Psal. lxv. 5.

To obſerve what he does with an humble reverence, is more than a ſpeculation; it has a place among the ſolemnities of worſhip: for *his way is great in the ſanctuary*, when *he does wonders, and declares his ſtrength among the people* (*c*).

You will all know the reaſon of my chooſing theſe words by the very ſound of them: I leave your own thoughts to fix a connection between what you read and what you hear. That duty may have a ſhare in our concern and diſcourſes about the preſent Invaſion, that we may think and talk of it like Chriſtians, I have led you back into a caſe of the ſame complexion with your own.

You need look no farther than this chapter for the whole ſtory that the text belongs to. *In the days of Ahaz King of Judah, Rezin the King of Syria, and Pekah the ſon of Remaliah King of Iſrael, went up towards Jeruſalem to war againſt it* (*d*). This war was begun in his good father's days; it was a quarrel of a long continuance (*e*). They purſued it in this King's reign with a great advantage: it is probable we have two ſeparate ſtories in that woful account; *The Lord God delivered him into the hand of the King of Syria, who ſmote him, and carried away a great multitude of them captives, and brought them to Damaſcus.* Beſides this, *Pekah the ſon of Remaliah ſlew in Judah an hundred and twenty thouſand in one day, all valiant men; and Iſrael led captive of their brethren two hundred thouſand women, ſons and daughters, and exceeding much ſpoil* (*f*): though, by the ſolemn perſuaſion of a Prophet, they refunded the captivity, and ſent the people back again to their own land. Theſe two enemies had each of them cruſhed *Ahaz* apart, and now they are joining to make the next deſolation more complete. The news of this expedition comes to court, with ſuch an influence upon them, as a people under the

(*c*) Pſal. lxxvii. 13, 14.
(*d*) Iſai. vii. 1.
(*e*) 2 Kings xv. 37.
(*f*) 2 Chron. xxviii. 5, 6.

the frown of GOD are most liable to. They, whose *hearts are fixed, trusting in the Lord*, need not be *afraid of evil tidings* (*g*); but when *it was told the house of David, that Syria was confederate with Ephraim, his heart was moved, and the heart of his people, as the trees are moved with the wind* (*h*).

We do not find any tincture of piety in all the disturbance: that Prince has a brand upon his name, as one of peculiar stupidity. He was neither to be allured nor frighted into his duty. A desperate humour of folly is what the Holy Ghost records for his most notorious character: *In the time of his distress he trespassed more against the Lord God of Israel; this is that King Ahaz* (*i*). But here behold the divine goodness! GOD deals with the *Jews* in those surprises of love that are promised to the *Gentiles:* we may say of this people, that he sends to them *who asked not for him, and is found of those who sought him not* (*k*). Though prayer has never a message to him, yet mercy has one to them. Thus kind is he to *the unthankful and the evil.* And how truly may this be wrought into our accounts of privilege under the Gospel? We are the charge of a Mediator, who *received gifts for men, even for the rebellious, that the Lord God might dwell amongst them* (*l*).

The Prophet comes upon a gracious errand, to hush the waves of terror and direct a calm: and you may observe with how much contempt he speaks of the invaders, and the noisy preparation they had made. *Take heed, and be quiet; fear not, neither be faint-hearted, for the two tails of these smoking firebrands; for the fierce anger of Rezin with Syria, and the son of Remaliah* (*m*). These are terms that *Ahaz* could not dare to give an enemy, who had scoured through the land before; his fear would rather magnify the danger

(*g*) Psal. cxii. 7.
(*h*) Isai. vii. 2.
(*i*) 2 Chron. xxviii. 22.
(*k*) Psal. lxv. 1.
(*l*) Psal. lxviii. 18.
(*m*) Isai. vii. 4.

danger than banter it. But GOD *sees not as man sees; he sits in the heavens*, from whence he surveys all the motions of nature, and there *he laughs* at them, there he *has them in derision* (*n*). My text is the grand resolve of eternal justice, where we see the enemy's confidence exposed as a thing most provoking; and then their sentence fixed, *because Syria, Ephraim, and the son of Remaliah, &c.* The device and assurance of these confederates are the crimes that fasten a ruin upon them. GOD loves to *take the wise in their own craftiness, and the counsel of the froward is carried headlong* (*o*). It is true there were many abominations in *Judah*. *Ahaz* is one of the most infamous names in all their roll of Kings; but that was no excuse to a ravening neighbour. The idolatry, violence, falshood, and unbelief of the people, deserved that GOD would *stir up all his wrath, to make a full end of them:* and yet he takes it ill that *Syria* and *Ephraim* are combined in a gloomy war against them. I will swell up the history into a general case, and give you the sense of it in this proposition:

GOD doth and will resent the designs and confidence of those who aim at the ruin or slavery of his people.

The parts of the text and doctrine are the same, and shall be considered together in the following method:

I. I will open the provocation of those, who design no less than the subjecting of GOD's people and interest to their own tyranny.
II. Enquire into the resentment of it, that has so good an aspect upon those in danger.
III. Apply the Discourse.

I. The

(*n*) Psal. ii. 4. (*o*) Job v. 13.

I. The device and confidence of the enemy, that is scandalous in the eyes of heaven, and shall be made so to the world, may be considered in the several branches of my text.

1. There is a vigorous application to the most formidable measures. Though it looks like a force upon nature, and shews what a power of infatuation cruelty may pretend to. The *Syrians* and the *ten tribes* were people whose interests and designs used to lie far asunder. In religious affairs they bore a very differing character: we find in their histories a great many quarrels and confusions among them; and yet these two unite in a design against *Jerusalem*. This was very provoking to God, that mischief should do what inclination could not; he therefore threatens to take off the restraint, and let the people who were now *confederate with Ephraim* return to their usual hatred. *The Syrians before, and the Philistines behind, and they shall devour Israel with open mouth* (*p*). This may put us upon lamenting the reputation that our various opinions have grown to. What pity is it that they should be thought worthy to divide us in the measures we pursue, and the conversation we choose? How much *wiser are the children of this world in their generation than the children of light* (*q*)? When there is any famous opposition to be made against Religion, men of jarring thoughts can unite in it; all varieties are laid asleep, and not suffered to damp the vigour they conspire with; the noise of passion is quieted; there is a suspence of mutual jealousies, when they have some common drudgery in hand against the peace of Christians.

David foretold this of our days; for though he found it so in person, yet the truth of the prophecy out-lived him, and belongs to these latter ages. *The Kings of the earth set themselves, and the Rulers take*

(*p*) Isai. ix. 12. (*q*) Luke xvi. 8.

counsel together against the Lord and against his anointed (*r*). The Apostles, in their exposition of this passage, apply it two ways: *First*, It helps them to understand the violence that was offered to our LORD, *Of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate*, persons divided by interest and envy, *with the Gentiles and people of Israel* (*s*), who were so mutually inflamed, that the one was always jealous of losing a government, and the other groaning under the weight of it; yet these were *gathered together to do whatever God's hand and counsel determined before to be done*. *Secondly*, It is what they fetch their own supports from, looking upon the mischief done to themselves as things aimed at in the prophecy: *Now, Lord, behold their threatnings, and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word: q. d.* They are pursuing the same track now; these are the standing politics of hell: the prince of darkness uses them as the most prevailing methods for his empire. He is and will be a rival to that *King who rules in righteousness*, and shall extend his dominion *from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth*. To these purposes he knows how to cement a multitude, and keep them entire to a design against Christianity: *They have taken crafty counsel against thy people, and consulted against thine hidden ones. They have said, Come, let us cut them off from being a nation, that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance. They have consulted together with one consent, they are confederate against thee* (*t*).

2. They speak with a great deal of pleasure in the design, and of confidence about the success; *Let us go up against Judah, and vex it, and make a breach therein for us, and set a King in the midst of it, even the son of Tabeal*. This is what GOD calls *evil counsel* in the former verse, and indeed there is every thing to

(*r*) Psal. ii. 2, 3, 4.
(*s*) Acts iv. 27, 29.
(*t*) Psal. lxxxiii. 3, 4, 5.

to make it so; a contempt of him, and a cruelty to his people. He has blamed the former, when it is the spirit of an Invasion, and *they say, Let us take to ourselves the houses of God in possession* (*u*). And as for the latter, their trampling upon the rights of mankind, it is the *abominable thing that his soul hates.* When once persons have frozen up the compassions of human nature, and learned to act without tenderness, as they are a burden to the earth, so they must needs be odious in the eyes of heaven. Indeed violent measures are oftentimes needful for the rescue or the protection of liberty. God has owned them with his blessing, and, upon some occasions, has enforced the terrible duty in a peculiar manner. *Cursed be he that does the work of the Lord deceitfully, and cursed be he that keeps back his sword from blood* (*x*). But they are people of another sort whom he calls *bloody and deceitful men*; who are compared to the *troubled sea that casts up mire and dirt: There is no peace, saith our God, to these wicked persons* (*y*). *He ordains his arrows against the persecutors* (*z*); and has hung a peculiar vengeance over them, which shall *rebuke the multitude of spearmen, and scatter the people that delight in war* (*a*). *The Lord trieth the righteous, but the wicked, and him that loveth violence, his soul hates: Upon these he will rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest; this shall be the portion of their cup* (*b*).

This is usually the temper of those who take their aim at Religion: the two things that made up the unrighteous Judge's character are seldom parted, *he feared not God, and he regarded not man* (*c*). Superstition is the high road to cruelty. When once people have subdued all sense of divinity, they become like

(*u*) Psal. lxxxiii. 12.
(*x*) Jer. xlviii. 10.
(*y*) Isai. lvii. 20, 21.
(*z*) Psal. vii. 13.
(*a*) Psal. lxviii. 30.
(*b*) Psal. xi. 5, 6.
(*c*) Luke xviii. 2.

the *brutes that periſh*. And this falls under the cenſure of a GOD whoſe *ways are judgment*. He blames *Edom* becauſe he *purſued his brother with a ſword, and did caſt off all pity; and his anger did tear perpetually, and he kept his wrath for ever* (*d*). It is in oppoſition to a deſign thus inflamed, that he puts on *the garments of vengeance for clothing, and covers himſelf with zeal as a cloke* (*e*). He prefers the ſame charge againſt mount *Seir*, that they could, without aſking him leave, ſeize the land of *Iſrael* as their own; that is, they did it in meditation and ſcheme, but there was an interpoſing fury to ruffle their meaſures. *Becauſe the enemy hath ſaid, Aha, even the ancient high places are ours in poſſeſſion; becauſe they have made you deſolate, and ſwallowed you up on every ſide, and ye are taken up in the lips of talkers, and are an infamy of the people: Therefore thus ſaith the Lord God, Surely in the fire of my jealouſy have I ſpoken againſt the reſidue of the Heathen, and againſt all Idumea, which have appointed my land into their poſſeſſion, with the joy of all their heart, with deſpiteful minds to caſt it out for a prey* (*f*).

3. The Deſign itſelf. The matter it conſiſted of was diſpleaſing, for which cauſe he devotes it to ruin: for *who is he that ſpeaketh, and it cometh to paſs, when the Lord commandeth it not* (*g*)? There were two things aimed at by this Invaſion.

1. Deſtruction and cruelty at preſent; *Let us go up againſt Judah, and vex it, and make a breach therein for us, i. e.* Work out the deſign by the unquiet and factious ſpirits that are amongſt them. GOD may have one end in unchaining the enemy, and they be purſuing another; though it is our comfort, that *there be many devices in man's heart, nevertheleſs the counſel of the Lord, that ſhall ſtand* (*h*). *There*

(*d*) Amos i. 11.
(*e*) Iſai. lix. 17.
(*f*) Ezek. xxxvi. 2, 3, 5.
(*g*) Lam. iii. 37.
(*h*) Prov. xix. 21.

There is no evil in the city but he has done it (*i*). *He gave Jacob to the spoil, and Israel to the robbers* (*k*). It is mentioned as an act of his Providence, that he *begun to send against Judah Rezin King of Syria, and Pekah the son of Remaliah* (*l*). When we consider his hand in it, we must call it by no harsher a name than correction; take it with patience, and cry for mercy. *If the Lord has stirred thee up against me*, says *David* to *Saul*, there is no disputing the case with him, *let him accept of a burnt-offering* (*m*). But this is consistent with a vigorous opposition to the designs of men; he seldom sanctifies the tools of such a discipline: they have nothing of his glory in view, but are merely passive to the gracious purpose of heaven; it is no part of their enquiry what such a people have done to dishonour God; the principles that breathe life into their cause, the measures they take to ripen it, and the end they are reaching to, are all comprehended in themselves. The distinction between God's design in sending them, and theirs in coming, is very plainly opened; *I gave him a charge to take the spoil, to take the prey, and tread them down like mire in the streets: howbeit, he meaneth not so, neither does his heart think so, but it is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few* (*n*). Sometimes an enemy has the confidence to boast a divine commission. *Am I come up without the Lord? The Lord said unto me, Go up against this land, and destroy it* (*o*). Which was true, but not in his sense: these are part of the words with which he came to *reproach the living God.* When a tyrant has been the common scourge of nations, tho' Providence may over-rule the violence, and use it to our spiritual advantage, yet the thing itself is most abominable to those *pure eyes that cannot behold evil, and look on iniquity* (*p*); so that it is no wonder that

(*i*) Amos iii. 6.
(*k*) Isai. xlii. 34.
(*l*) 2 Kings xv. 37.
(*m*) 1 Sam xxvi. 19.
(*n*) Isai. x. 6, 7.
(*o*) Isai. xxxvi. 10.

God dissolves a power thus vexatious. *He that smote the people in wrath with a continual stroke, he that ruled the nations in anger, is persecuted, and none hindreth: the whole earth is at rest and quiet, they break forth into singing* (*q*). But another thing that these invaders aimed at was,

2. Conquest and usurpation for the future. It was not enough to plunder them in one battle, but they design a continuing advantage over them: *Let us set a King in the midst of it, even the son of Tabeal.* Who this *titular Prince* was, that must be the THING they work with, is neither certain nor material. Be he of what line he will, there were three flaws in his pretences.

First, He was not of *David*'s family, whom God had chosen by name, and *ordained a lamp for his anointed* (*r*). For, though it was *of the Lord* that the ten tribes should revolt, when *Rehoboam* denied their *claim of right*, yet still *David* was *not* to *want a man before him.* The reason of this was rather prophetical than historical; not so much for his heart's being *right all his days*, as *because of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne* (*s*). This honour of having the government run in his family, was peculiar to him. This is the only race of Kings that could ever claim a divine appointment. *Abijah*'s argument for a succession could be pleaded by none out of that family: *Ought ye not to know, that the Lord God of Israel gave the kingdom over Israel to David for ever, even to him and to his sons, by a covenant of salt* (*t*)? He had *taken away his loving kindness from Saul*; but promises to *build David a sure house.* So that this PRETENDER, *the son of Tabeal*, by his Invasion, was clashing with a positive order of heaven, and in open rebellion

(*p*) Hab. i. 13.
(*q*) Isai. xiv. 6, 7.
(*r*) Psal. cxxxii. 17.
(*s*) Acts ii. 30.
(*t*) 2 Chron. xiii. 5.

rebellion to a Messiah, who was to be *of the seed of David according to the flesh* (*u*). But this argument was peculiar to the *Jews*, and to those ages of their constitution; God had limited and directed them both in worship and government; *He has not dealt so with any other nation* (*x*).

Secondly, This man did not come with the consent of *Judah*. It was a good argument in *Hushai* the *Archite*, though *Absalom* had no claim to it: *Whom the Lord and his people, and all the men of Israel choose, his will I be, and with him will I abide* (*y*). And this last branch of the claim is the highest that any in the world can pretend to. For though *the powers that be are ordained of God* (*z*), yet it is a staring impudence for men to tell us that he names the persons, or any other way shews his approbation than by the voice of the people. This gives the fairest title to one *in authority*, and the best hopes of a *quiet and peaceable life* to those that are *under him*. Imposing a governor is an act of presuming cruelty, and usually an inlet to all national miseries at once. God has therefore thrown it in amongst the plagues of a people whom he contended with: *I will give the Egyptians over into the hands of a cruel Lord, and a fierce King shall rule over them* (*a*). When the *decree was brought forth* against *Israel*, what a dismal compass of ruin did it take? Their religion was defiled; *The adversary spread out his hand upon all their pleasant things*; *the heathen entred into the sanctuary, whom God did command that they should not come into the congregation* (*b*). Their civil liberties were equally the jest and property of others; *Their inheritance turned to strangers, and their houses to aliens* (*c*). And therefore when God smiles upon them, it is with a

(*u*) Rom. i. 3.
(*x*) Psalm cxlvii 30.
(*y*) 2 Sam xvi. 18.
(*z*) Romans xiii. 1.
(*a*) Isa. xix. 4.
(*b*) Lam. i. 10.
(*c*) Lam. v. 2.

reſcue of this privilege: *I will bring again the captivity of Jacob's tents, and have mercy on his dwelling-places; and the city ſhall be builded on her own heap, and the palace ſhall remain after the manner thereof. Their nobles ſhall be of themſelves, and their governors ſhall proceed from the midſt of them* (*d*). This is more than the ſon of *Tabeal* could pretend to.

Thirdly, He was only to be the tool of thoſe that raiſed him to the throne. His authority was not a government, but an engine that others were turning round at their pleaſure. So that they make him a jailor rather than a King: one that is to keep a nation of ſlaves in awe; and not be the head of a people who have any privileges to enjoy, or any to loſe.

This was the provocation of the invaders, and this the miſerable ſtate which they would humble *Judah* into. But the people, thus endangered from abroad, are fenced about with a promiſe; *Thus ſaith the Lord God, It ſhall not ſtand, neither ſhall it come to paſs.* Theſe words will have their place under the ſecond general head; which is,

II. To inquire into God's reſentment of it. He *breaks* them and their deſign *with a rod of iron, he daſhes them in pieces like a potter's veſſel* (*e*).

1. This way he fulfils a providential anger againſt the enemy. It is but the iſſue of a diſpleaſure that has been long a gathering: *a performing the intents of his heart* (*f*). When a people have prepared themſelves for ruin by the flower and more common acts of injuſtice, they uſually take the final plunge by ſome viſible oppoſition to the intereſt of Christ. *For the violence againſt Jacob, ſhame was to cover the Edomites, and they muſt be cut off for ever* (*g*). The ten tribes were run very deep in ſcore to juſtice; there was

(*d*) Jer. xxx. 18, 21.
(*e*) Pſalm ii. 9.
(*f*) Jer. xxx. 24.
(*g*) Obad. 10.

was a growth of guilt for several ages to deserve a captivity. But when they enter upon this expedition, vengeance deals more plainly with them; *Within threescore and five years shall Ephraim be broken that it be not a people* (*h*), *i. e.* so long from the date of some former threatning. For according to the clearest computation that I can make from scripture, *Samaria* was taken about eighteen or nineteen years after this; though indeed the captivity grew: armies were sent afterwards to glean the country, and fetch away the little that a former desolation had left. They were told before that ruin would come upon them; but now God fixes a period, and tells them that these threatnings were of no longer than threescore and five years running, a great part of which time was spent when *Isaiah* delivered this message. This may be an useful consideration to his people, when they are molested by such as God has a long reckoning with. *He will avenge the blood of his servants that is shed, though he bear long* with the enemy. *Iniquity shall have an end.* Let us therefore take fast hold of that promise, *Thou shalt bring down the noise of strangers as the heat in a dry place, even the heat with the shadow of a cloud: the branch of the terrible ones shall be brought low* (*i*).

2. Thus he secures the honour of his name, not only to shew himself a God *glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders*; but a God that *keeps covenant and mercy to those that fear him.* That is the favourite, the darling glory, for he has *exalted his word above all his name* (*k*). It is in this language that he props the faith of *Israel*, and enables them to brave the enemy: *Associate yourselves, O ye people, and ye shall be broken to pieces; and give ear, all ye of far countries: gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken to pieces; yea, gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken to pieces. Take counsel together, and it shall come*

(*h*) Obad. 8.
(*i*) Isa. xxv. 5.
(*k*) Psalm cxxxviii. 3.

come to nought; speak the word, and it shall not stand, for God is with us (*l*). Thus he promises the *Jews* a deliverance from the *Assyrian*, that the *First-born of the poor shall feed, and the needy lie down in safety* (*m*). And what is the fountain-mercy that the salvation springs from? You see, *The Lord has founded Sion, and the poor of his people shall trust in it* (*n*). The confidence of those that were united in this invasion upon *Judah*, did equally strike at their happiness and God's honour. They disposed of things and persons, as if success was their property, and *Israel* their claim. But God takes this occasion to let them know, that he *rules in Jacob to the ends of the earth.* As they can do nothing without him any where, so in a particular manner they have no right to meddle here. I will read you a passage which you can scarce hear without an application: it lets us see how tender God is of his honour, the honour of being related to a people, of having an interest in the worship they pay, and the liberties they enjoy. Whenever these are touched, vengeance awakens itself upon the criminal. The words are; *Because thou hast said, These two nations and these two countries shall be mine, and we will possess it, whereas the Lord was there: Therefore as I live, saith the Lord God, I will even do according to thine anger, and according to thine envy, which thou hast used out of thy hatred against them; and I will make known myself among them, when I have judged thee. And thou shalt know that I am the Lord, and that I have heard all thy blasphemies which thou hast spoken against the mountains of Israel, saying, They are laid desolate, they are given us to consume. Thus with your mouth ye have boasted against me, and have multiplied your words against me; I have heard them. Thus saith the Lord God, When the whole earth rejoiceth, I will make thee desolate* (*o*).

3. This

(*l*) Isa. viii. 9, 10.
(*m*) Isa. xiv. 30.
(*n*) Isa. xiv. 32.
(*o*) Ezek. xxxv. 10, 11, 12. 13, 14.

3. This is in answer to the prayers of his people. Though *Ahaz* took very irregular steps, we cannot imagine that all the remains of piety were gone. There were some few, of whom the Prophet could use those words that are typical of CHRIST; *Behold I and the children thou hast given me are for signs!* In what? *I wait upon the Lord, who hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him* (*p*). This will do: it has done, with little or no concurrence of nature. *The people rested themselves upon the words of* Hezekiah, when *Rabshakeh* was bauling at their gates: that which heartned them was, *With them is an arm of flesh, but with us is the Lord our God* (*q*). It is an ill sign upon a nation, when GOD saith of them, *I sought for a man among them that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found none* (*r*). Things are brought to a sad pitch indeed, when there is no good return to that enquiry: *Run to and fro, and see now and know, and seek in the broad places, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth, and I will pardon it* (*s*). But when the spirit of grace and supplication is poured out, it makes a people terrible as an army with banners. This was the usual round of the *Jews*, unbelief and revolt betrayed them into captivity; but *when they cried unto the Lord, he raised them up a deliverer* (*t*). They that are in such a case may sing, *We have a strong city, salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks* (*u*). Let there be more of this amongst us, that our deliverance may be capable of that title, *When the enemy cometh in like a flood, the spirit of the Lord lifteth up a standard against him* (*x*).

4. It

(*p*) Isa. viii. 17, 18.
(*q*) 2 Chron xxxii. 8.
(*r*) Ezek. xxii. 30.
(*s*) Jer. v. 1.
(*t*) Judges iii. 15.
(*u*) Isa. xxvi. 1.
(*x*) Isa. lix. 19.

4. It is a preparation for the government he has given to a Mediator. This deliverance out of the hands of *Syria* and *Ephraim* was a long way removed from CHRIST's appearance upon earth, and much longer from the kingdom that he is to have; and yet what the Prophet speaks of one mercy flows into the other: *A virgin shall conceive a son, and call his name Immanuel* (*y*). And in the next chapter he runs up the argument to the same pitch: *Say ye not a confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say a confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid: Sanctify the Lord of Hosts himself, and let him be your dread; and he shall be for a sanctuary, but for a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel* (*z*). This LORD of Hosts is he of whom the Apostle says, *To them that believe he is precious, but to the disobedient a stone of stumbling* (*a*). *He must reign till he has put all his enemies under his feet* (*b*). Besides the conquest that he has over the hearts of men, making them a *willing people in the day of his power*; he also *smites through Kings in the day of his wrath, wounding the heads over many countries* (*c*). Let us learn then to carry a deliverance forwards. A Redeemer's blood has deserved it, and his glory is promoted by it. Every temporal salvation is the creature of his argument in heaven, and a step towards his empire upon earth. *The burden shall be taken away from thy shoulder, and the yoke from thy neck: the yoke shall be destroyed, because of the anointing* (*d*); or because of the Messiah, that he may shew himself to be a Priest, who atones and pleads for them to purpose; and a *Priest upon his throne* (*e*), who has all authority committed to him, and must have *a name above every name.*

The

(*y*) Isa. lix. 14.
(*z*) Isa. viii. 12, 13, 14.
(*a*) 1 Pet. ii. 6.
(*b*) 1 Cor. xv.
(*c*) Psalm cx. 2, 5.
(*d*) Isa. x. 27.
(*e*) Zech. vi. 13.

The Application of this Discourse may be summed up in *David*'s words, *Be still, and know that the Lord is God* (*f*). We are to confess him upon such an occasion five ways.

1. By an expectation and rest upon his arm in all our dangers: *If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established* (*g*). When he writes bitter things against us, it is to let us know, that *without him we shall bow down under the prisoners, and fall under the slain* (*h*). Indeed preparations and counsels are needful. Our hope of success is limited to a road of endeavour. But *an horse is a vain thing for safety, neither can he deliver any by his great strength* (*i*). Though he is *prepared for the battle, yet salvation is from the Lord* (*k*). And if he do not *keep the city, the watchman watcheth but in vain* (*l*). He blames on one hand the confidence and stupidity of a people that are dead to all impressions of danger; and on the other, those unruly fears that act as if we had lost a God. *Who art thou that art afraid of a man that shall die, and the son of man that shall be made as grass, and forgettest the Lord thy Maker* (*m*)?

2. By earnest importunity for his help. We are now got into the Prophet's case, who cried out, *Make ye mention to the nations, behold, publish against Jerusalem, that watchers are come from a far country, and give out their voice against the cities of Judah. I cannot hold my peace, because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war* (*n*). The way to relief lies very open to us. When *Hezekiah* had an enemy in his land, he makes a religious matter of it, and sends this message to *Isaiah*: It is *a day of blasphemy, rebuke and trouble; wherefore lift up thy*

(*f*) Psal. xlvi. 10.
(*g*) Psal. xlvi. 11.
(*h*) Isai. x. 4.
(*i*) Psal. xxxiii. 17.
(*k*) Prov. xxi. 31.
(*l*) Psal. cxxvii. 1.
(*m*) Isai. li. 12, 13.
(*n*) Jer. iv. 16, 19.

thy prayer for the remnant that is left (*o*). And what an immediate anſwer does GOD make to it? *I will ſend a blaſt upon him, and he ſhall hear a rumour, and return to his own land* (*p*). That good King does not recommend the duty to others, that he may ſhift it out of his own hands, but begs in perſon: *Incline thine ears, O Lord, and hear; open thine eyes, O Lord, and ſee* (*q*). And when the mercy is given in, it is under the notion of an anſwer to him: *Whereas thou haſt prayed to me againſt Sennacherib the King of Aſſyria, this is the Word which the Lord has ſpoken concerning* him (*r*)—*He ſhall not come into this city, nor ſhoot an arrow there, nor come before it with ſhields, nor caſt a bank againſt it; by the way that he came, by the ſame ſhall he return* (*s*).

3. By a converſation that becomes the Goſpel of of CHRIST, and our hope of a providental mercy. *Waſh ye, make ye clean, put away the evil of your doings, ceaſe to do evil, learn to do well: If you be willing and obedient, ye ſhall eat the fruit of the land; but if ye refuſe and rebel, ye ſhall all be deſtroyed by the ſword; the mouth of the Lord has ſpoken it* (*t*). Our greateſt danger is from thoſe crying provocations which make the earth to mourn, and the heavens to gather blackneſs. Let not *iniquity ſeparate betwixt you and your God. Truſt in the Lord, ſo ſhall ye be eſtabliſhed; believe his Prophets, ſo ſhall ye proſper* (*u*).

4. By returning all the praiſe of our deliverance to him. He ſtamps his own name upon the ſlur that was given to the *Aſſyrian* Invaſion: *I will put my hook into thy noſe, and my bridle in thy lips; and I will turn thee back by the way which thou cameſt* (*x*). He ſpeaks to him as a brute and a ſlave. It is a compariſon that

(*o*) Iſai. xxxvii. 3.
(*p*) Iſai. xxxvii. 7.
(*q*) Iſai. xxxvii. 17.
(*r*) Iſai. xxxvii. 21, 22.
(*s*) Iſai. xxxvii. 33, 34.
(*t*) Iſai. i. 16, 17, 19, 20.
(*u*) 2 Chron. xx. 20.
(*x*) Iſai. xxxvii. 29.

that *stains the pride of all glory*, showing him the baseness of his nature, and of his condition too.

5. By an application to him for the spiritual benefit, and the everlasting issue of all these mercies. Every believer has a greater salvation in his eye, than those that are now wrought out in Providence. There is *a city that has foundations, whose builder and maker is God* (*y*): as it is never to sink with any weight of its own, so it is eternally above the danger of being invaded. All our deliverances now, without a title to this, are but a short respite from a worse and a longer captivity. Let us therefore make it our chief desire, that the supreme *redemption* may be *drawing nigh*. This hope enlarges and shews itself by *a patient continuance in well-doing*: for *the work of righteousness shall be peace*; *and the effect of righteousness, quietness, and assurance for ever* (*z*).

(*y*) Heb. xi. 10. | (*z*) Isai. xxxii. 17.

SERMON

SERMON X.

On the Thankſgiving-Day appointed for her Majeſty's Succeſſes in *Flanders* and *Spain*.

Preached NOVEMBER 7, 1710.

ISAIAH XXIV. 16.

From the uttermoſt parts of the earth have we heard ſongs, even glory to the righteous: but I ſaid, My leanneſs, my leanneſs, wo unto me! the treacherous dealers have dealt treacherouſly, yea, the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherouſly.

IT is all one to the ſolemn occaſion upon which I have called your thoughts to theſe words, whether you conſider them as a Prophecy of what was to happen afterwards, or a hiſtory of what really came to paſs in the days when they were writ. Though they may be underſtood of the Salvation that would find its way to the *Gentiles*, *the uttermoſt parts of the earth*, and the ſad calamity that *Iſrael* muſt be left under, when GOD had *concluded them all in unbelief* (*a*); yet they were true enough in the Prophet's own

(*a*) Rom. xi. 32.

own time. He lived in *Hezekiah*'s reign, when the King of *Aſſyria* had made one invaſion upon them, and was threatning them with another; ſeveral good deſigns were blaſted, when they had almoſt got their perfection: *The children were come to the birth, and there was not ſtrength to bring forth (b).* They had great diſcoveries of a Meſſiah, who was to *raiſe up the tabernacle of David*; but a flood of impiety and violence gave them the proſpect of a deſolation before thoſe *times of refreſhing ſhould come.* Their public mercies were interlined with danger, which obliged them to worſhip with a compoſition of praiſe and ſorrow, to *ſerve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling* (c). *In the day of proſperity* their duty was to *rejoice, in the day of adverſity* they were called to *conſider*; and now *God had ſet the one over againſt the other (d).*

The ill face of their concerns in one place ſhould not make them forget what God had done for them in another; and the ſucceſs they had abroad was to be admired with a ſerious dread of what they were ſuffering at home. Our Prophet takes his part in both theſe reflections:

I. He owns the public mercy they had received, though it was afar off; *From the uttermoſt parts of the earth have we heard ſongs:* or, that which was the happy occaſion of them, *even glory to the righteous.*

II. He calls in the joy that was running ſo freely upon one act of Providence, to the different views they were led to by another: *I ſaid, My leanneſs, my leanneſs! Wo unto me! the treacherous dealers have dealt treacherouſly, yea the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherouſly.*

That

(b) Iſai. xxxvii. 3.
(c) Pſalm ii. 11.
(d) Eccl. vii. 14.

That I may comprehend my whole deſign from theſe words within one Sermon, I can do little more than take them aſunder, giving you both the ſenſe and the improvement of them as we go along.

I. In his account of thoſe public mercies that Providence had given them, you may obſerve three things:

The place where they happened, *the uttermoſt parts of the earth.*

The work they inclined the people to, which is here expreſſed by the *ſongs* that were heard.

And the nature of the bleſſing itſelf; the happineſs it either conſiſted of, or was tending to, *glory to the righteous.*

(1.) The mercy that our Prophet takes notice of, was ſomething that happened at a great diſtance from the place where he lived, ſo that his family and country were not immediate gainers by it; it was *from the uttermoſt parts of the earth* that they *heard* theſe *ſongs*, and yet they fall into the conſort, from the ſympathy there is among all good people, who *will rejoice with thoſe that do rejoice.* From ſuch a temper, on this occaſion, we may

Obſerve, That every religious perſon is ſo unconfined in his thoughts and wiſhes, that he can be glad in a mercy that falls to the ſhare of others. The reaſons of this ingenuous diffuſive concern are plain.

1ſt, It is from that common intereſt that unites all believers. They are repreſented as the *body of Chriſt, and members one of another*; to tell us, that beſides the humble relation they bear to him, there is a mutual tenderneſs that circulates among themſelves; *Whether one member ſuffer, all the members ſuffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it* (*e*). The Apoſtle could be glad at the

(*e*) 1 Cor. xii. 26.

proſperity of the *Corinthian* church, though a very different way of living fell to his lot: *Ye are full, ye are rich, ye have reigned as Kings without us; and I would to God that ye did reign, that we alſo might reign with you. We are fools for Chriſt's ſake, ye are wiſe in Chriſt; we are weak, ye are ſtrong; ye are honourable, we are deſpiſed* (*f*).

Thus it ought to be in the reverſe of this caſe: when we *are delivered from the hand of thoſe that hate us*, and can *ſerve God without fear*, we ſhould *remember them that are in bonds, as being bound with them; and thoſe that ſuffer adverſity, as being ourſelves alſo in the body* (*g*): not out of the reach of thoſe evils which are actually their lot, and may ſoon be ours. This is *bearing one another's burdens, and fulfilling the Law of Chriſt* (*h*). Though gratitude ſhould put us in mind of the happy diſtinctions God has made between us and others, yet compaſſion has a noble way of forgetting all that, and placing our own ſouls in their caſe. Thus it was with the *Jews* in their Revolution: *When God turned again their captivity, filling their mouth with laughter, and their tongue with ſinging* (*i*), they could not forget thoſe they had left behind, but beg it as a new mercy; *Lord, turn again our captivity, as ſtreams in the ſouth*; that they who yet *ſow in tears may reap in joy*; *and every one who now goes forth weeping, bearing his precious ſeed, may come again rejoicing, bringing his ſheaves with him.*

And the ſame ſpirit of univerſal concern ſhould guide us when the ſcales are turned. Though we may be on the ſuffering ſide, it is a mercy that God deals in ſofter methods with any of our brethren. The poor Chriſtians in *Judea*, who lived on the contributions of other churches, *they abounded in many thankſgivings to God*; it was with no envy that they conſidered other people in better circumſtances, but

(*f*) 1 Cor. iv. 8, 10.
(*g*) Heb. xiii. 3.
(*h*) Gal. vi. 3.
(*i*) Pſalm cxxvi. 1, 2.

but rather *by the experiment of this miniſtration, they glorified God for their profeſſed ſubjection to the Goſpel of Chriſt* (*k*). Religion ſanctifies and improves ſuch a temper, it helps us to take a part in the good of others. People thus inclined are prepared to be called in by thoſe words, *Rejoice with Jeruſalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her; rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her* (*l*). *David* begs to have his mercies in a public way; *O viſit me with thy ſalvation, that I may ſee the good of thy choſen; that I may rejoice in the gladneſs of thy nation; that I may glory with thine inheritance* (*m*). It was this that fetched out ſo many good wiſhes from the people as they went into *the houſe of God*; *Peace be within thy walls, and proſperity within thy palaces: For my brethren and companions ſake, I will now ſay, Peace be within thee* (*n*). And it is promiſed as the greateſt encouragement to *the man who fears the Lord*; *God ſhall bleſs him out of Sion, and he ſhall ſee the good of Jeruſalem all the days of his life* (*o*).

2. The honour of God and our dear Redeemer is advanced by this means; ſo that though we ſhould ſeem to be more out of the way of his care, yet we muſt *bleſs him that comes in the name of the Lord*, and ſing to the Providence, *peace in heaven, and glory in the higheſt*. If he does but *increaſe*, and a way is opened for the enlarging of his kingdom; though we are in a *decreaſing* ſtate, therein *we do rejoice, yea and will rejoice* (*p*). It was a ſad conſideration to the Apoſtles, that their own countrymen, the *Jews*, had ſo many marks upon them of a people caſt off by God; but under this melancholy view, they had the ſatisfaction to ſee, that though the Goſpel removed its place, it did not loſe its virtue. Thus, though *Iſrael* was not gathered, a Redeemer would

(*k*) 2 Cor. ix 12, 13.
(*l*) Iſa. lxvi. 10.
(*m*) Pſalm cvi. 4, 5.
(*n*) Pſalm cxxii. 7, 8.
(*o*) Pſalm cxxviii. 5.
(*p*) John iii. 30.

be glorious, by forming an intereſt among the *Gentiles*: and ſo it ought to be with every Chriſtian; though he cannot think of loſing what GOD has given him without a dread (for *wo unto us when his ſoul departs from us*) yet his good wiſhes *follow the Lamb whitherſoever he goes (q)*. He rejoices at the ſucceſs of religion, and the eſtabliſhment of liberty in thoſe places where he is never like to come: he loves to hear of *ſongs*, and *glory to the righteous*, though it be *from the uttermoſt parts of the earth*.

3. It is an argument upon which faith can plead, and wait for a return of mercy to ourſelves. The GOD who had given this Prophet *ſongs* from abroad, was able to cure the *leanneſs* he complained of at home. It is a ſign that *his arm is not ſhortned (r)*; nor has he totally abandoned his people, but *judgment will return unto righteouſneſs, and all the upright in heart ſhall follow it (s)*. Theſe are plain demonſtrations, that the caſe is not deſperate, upon which we may *thank God and take courage (t)*; ſuch a turn as this puts a new credit upon the promiſes, when we begun to think they were growing out of date: and thus, *to the upright there ariſes light in the midſt of darkneſs (u)*. We may hope, though we have been *anſwered by terrible things in righteouſneſs*, yet he is ſtill *the God of our ſalvation*; when we hear that *he is the confidence of all the ends of the earth (x)*, it is an argument that he will not be unmindful of us when *they who dwell in the uttermoſt parts are afraid of his tokens*.

With theſe expectations we may look upon the late victories in *Spain* and *Flanders*, as an evidence that GOD yet *goes forth with our armies*, and will be *to the reſidue of his people as in the former years*. It is good pleading on ſuch an inſtance, *Wilt thou not revive us again*,

(q) Rev. xiv. 4.
(r) Iſa. lix. 1.
(s) Pſalm xciv. 15.
(t) Acts xxviii. 15.
(u) Pſalm cxii. 4.
(x) Pſalm lxv. 5.

again, that thy people may rejoice in thee (y)? And we may humbly conclude, that *ſurely his ſalvation is near unto them that fear him, that glory may dwell in our land* (z).

(2.) Another thing obſervable in this mercy, is the duty that it led the people to, and that was *ſongs. We have heard* theſe, *i. e.* We have heard the joy that it put them into: they are glad at the breaking of *a yoke which they could not bear.* Or, we have heard the things, and improved them into ſongs at home; for when God's *works praiſe him, his ſaints ſhould bleſs him* (a). This ſignifies two things, which the news of every public mercy ought to produce in us.

1. A pleaſure in ourſelves. *Be glad for ever*, ſays God, *in what I create; for behold I create Jeruſalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy* (b). *When the Lord turned again our captivity, we were like them that dreamed*; the thing ſtole in upon the ſenſes, before it could make its way to reaſon: it was equally hard to deny it and believe it; the former would be acting againſt facts, and the latter againſt hopes. On ſuch occaſions our gladneſs ſhould have the control of every other paſſion. The *Jews*, when they went out of captivity, met with a great many difficulties, and *they wept when they heard the law:* but *Nehemiah, Ezra*, and the *Levites* that taught them, ſaid to them, *This day is holy unto the Lord your God, mourn not nor weep; but go your way, eat the fat and drink the ſweet, and ſend portions to them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto the Lord: neither be ye ſorry, for the joy of the Lord is your ſtrength* (c). And indeed our zeal for God's glory and the concerns of religion, deſerves to bear down any preſent affliction.

(y) Pſalm lxxxv. 6.
(z) Pſalm lxxxv. 9.
(a) Pſalm cxlv. 10.
(b) Iſa. lxv. 18.
(c) Neh. viii. 9, 10, 11.

When they ſat by the rivers of Babylon, though there was no ſinging *the Lord's ſong in a ſtrange land* (*d*), yet they could *not forget Jeruſalem*, or ceaſe to *prefer it above their chiefeſt joy*.

2. A gratitude to the God who has given us this great mercy. We are to turn it into devotion: *Ye ſhall have a ſong as in the night, when a holy ſolemnity is kept, and gladneſs of heart, as when one goes with a pipe, to come into the mountain of the Lord, to the mighty one of Iſrael* (*e*). This is what he expects from us as a return to any kindneſs. When *Hezekiah* recovered from his ſickneſs, he went into the temple with this reſolution, *The Lord was ready to ſave me, and therefore we will ſing my ſongs to the ſtringed inſtruments all the days of our lives* (*f*). And the beſtowing of a favour is called *putting a new ſong into our mouths, even praiſe to the Lord* (*g*); which is an argument that we ſhould receive it under ſuch an influence. This lets us ſee what courſe our pleaſure in a mercy ſhould be directed to: it ought to go off in a veneration for him whoſe work it is. Beſides the ſerenity that it ſpreads over our own minds, we ſhould *offer the ſacrifice of praiſe, even the fruit of our lips, giving thanks unto his name* (*h*).

(3.) We need not wonder that the mercy is expreſſed in *ſongs*, when we read what it conſiſts of, even *glory to the righteous*; either,

1. To a righteous God, or the Meſſiah, who is ſo often called the Holy One: he is to have the glory of every Providence; the ſong is devoted to him: Or,

2. To a righteous cauſe; which freedom of worſhip, according to the Scriptures, and quiet enjoyment of civil properties, always was and always will be. This

(*d*) Pſalm cxxxvii. 4.
(*e*) Iſa. xxx. 29.
(*f*) Iſa. xxxviii. 20.
(*g*) Pſalm xl. 3.
(*h*) Heb. xiii. 15.

This will have a glory put upon it, by thoſe diſplays that GOD gives of himſelf in favour of his own people. Or,

3. To righteous men. They will have a ſhare in the glory, which an envious world would not allow them; but it ſhall riſe from the ſucceſs and bleſſing that GOD has followed them with. All theſe interpretations may be comprehended in the ſenſe of the words, which you may take in this

Obſerv. The public mercies we receive at the hands of GOD, are for his own and his peoples glory; to advance his name in the world, and preſerve *a ſeed to ſerve him, who will be accounted to the Lord for a generation* (*i*). It is to make religion more triumphant in the hearts and lives of men; that *being delivered from the fear of our enemies, we may ſerve him in righteouſneſs and holineſs all our days* (*k*). And if that is the deſign of ſuch a Providence, then,

1. It ought to be improved to theſe noble ends: not to *make proviſion for the fleſh, and fulfil the luſts thereof* (*l*); but rather to take heart in the practical part of Chriſtianity: to abound in faith and holineſs, learning to be more cool towards a world, where every thing is uncertain, and uniting our main regard to an intereſt in heaven. From ſuch a diſpenſation we ſhould get a ſpirit above the fear of men: for after GOD has over-ruled *the fury of the oppreſſor*, it is our glory not to be *afraid of a man that ſhall die, and the ſon of man that ſhall be made as graſs, and forget the Lord our maker* (*m*).

2. We may uſe it as an earneſt of thoſe good things that GOD has told us of in his word: for if *the glory of the righteous* is promoted by every conqueſt of the enemy, what a happy ſtate will that be, when they are all taken away who *rejoice in their pride, and are haughty becauſe*

(*i*) Pſalm xxii. 30.
(*k*) Luke i. 74, 75.
(*l*) Romans xiii. *ult.*
(*m*) Iſa. li. 12, 13.

becauſe of his holy mountain? When *the remnant of Iſrael ſhall not do iniquity, nor ſpeak lies, neither ſhall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth; for they ſhall feed, and lie down, and none ſhall make them afraid* (*n*)? This is *a glory that ſhall be revealed in us* (*o*): and though *things continuing as they were from the beginning*, or rather growing worſe, may lead us into the queſtion, *Where is now the promiſe of his coming* (*p*)? yet *the time to favour Sion, yea the ſet time will come.* And the miſeries that fall upon GOD's people are no contradiction to their hope: for there is nothing gives a greater dawn to that mercy, than when they are *taking pleaſure in the ſtones, and favouring the duſt thereof* (*q*).

Follow every victory then with prayer and faith: do nothing upon theſe occaſions unworthy of the glory you bear at preſent, or that you expect hereafter. Remember that all theſe confuſions and daſhing of one monarch againſt another, are to promote the intereſt of Religion, that *the kingdom may be the Lord's, and he the governor over the nations*; and that ſome may *ariſe, and declare to a people yet unborn, that he has done this* (*r*).

Thus you ſee with what temper of mind the good Prophet in our text regarded the *ſongs* that he *heard from the uttermoſt parts of the earth.* He took a ſhare in them, as they imported *glory to the righteous.* The whole argument may be eaſily brought over into our own caſe. GOD has lately renewed our hopes of ſeeing the enemy diſtreſſed in *Flanders*, and driven out of *Spain:* and in this his Providence ſeemed to remove the only impediment to a general peace. The article that came moſt into debate, appeared in a fair way of being anſwered, when the *French* were preparing to receive the *man*, whom they would not agree to re-call.

Obliging

(*n*) Zeph. iii. 11, 12.
(*o*) Rom. viii. 18.
(*p*) 2 Pet. iii. 4.
(*q*) Pſal. cxxii. 14.
(*r*) Pſal. xxii. 28, 31.

Obliging him to quit that kingdom, which they objected againſt, was a work put into other hands, and the difficulty almoſt over. And if we could hear what is *ſung* in thoſe *uttermoſt parts*, it would be to the *glory* of that *learned hero*, who has been *mighty both in deed and word*; and having ſo nobly defended a Revolution in *Britain*, has had the ſucceſs to begin one in *Spain*. A perſon equally happy at his pen and ſword, to *convince gainſayers*, and *put to ſilence the ignorance of fooliſh men*. May liberty always proſper in thoſe good hands, when he either pleads it as an argument, or purſues it as a cauſe! But,

II. The Prophet had ſomething very melancholy in his caſe, when he gave theſe *ſongs of glory to the righteous* ſo much interruption, as to complain, *My leanneſs, my leanneſs! Wo unto me! the treacherous dealer dealeth treacherouſly*; *yea, the treacherous dealer dealeth very treacherouſly*. Here you may obſerve,

1. The matter of his lamentation is *leanneſs*: and it muſt ſignify a diſmal caſe, when he repeats it, as if it had diſſolved his hopes, and unraveled all that GOD had been doing for them abroad. We can ſcarce underſtand it of a perſonal calamity, though he calls it *his leanneſs*; unleſs it may be ſuppoſed that he was a man pointed at by a malicious world, as one that ſhould be given up to popular fury, as he had once complained before: *Behold I, and the children God has given me, are for ſigns and wonders in Iſrael* (*s*).

But *the leanneſs* here ſeems to include the miſery of ſeveral others beſides himſelf: it is threatned upon all *Iſrael*. *In that day it ſhall come to paſs, that the glory of Jacob ſhall be made thin, and the fatneſs of his fleſh ſhall wax lean. And it ſhall be as when the harveſt-man gathers the corn, and reaps the ears with his arm. Yet gleaning grapes ſhall be left in it, as the ſhaking of an olive-tree, two or three berries in the uppermoſt bough, four*

(*s*) Iſai. viii. 18.

four or five in the outmoſt fruitful branches thereof (*t*). And I the rather chooſe to underſtand the judgment to be thus extenſive in this chapter, becauſe we find ſome of thoſe words repeated: *When thus it ſhall be in the midſt of the land, among the people, there ſhall be as the ſhaking of an olive-tree, and as the gleaning grapes when the vintage is done* (*u*). Now the *leanneſs* that gave him ſo deep a concern may include two things.

(1.) The abounding of ſin and wickedneſs among them. And the book is full of theſe complaints: *Thy Princes are rebellious and companions of thieves; every one loves gifts, and follows after rewards* (*x*). Nothing could ſave them but a thorough reformation; *reſtoring their Judges as at the firſt, and their Counſellors as at the beginning* (*y*). In another chapter he gives a moſt tragical account how they had ſunk from the figure they made abroad, and the ſedateneſs they once enjoyed at home: *The mighty man, the man of war, the judge, the prophet, the prudent, the ancient, the captain of fifty, and the honourable man; the counſellor, the cunning artificer, and the eloquent orator* (*z*): theſe were all partners either in the crime or the infelicity of thoſe days. And they ſeemed to be going on faſt to ruin, when common civility and juſtice failed among them; rudeneſs ran looſe and wild, the laws were huſhed that it might have no control: *I will give children to be their oppreſſors, and babes ſhall rule over them: The people ſhall be oppreſſed every one by another, and every one by his neighbour: The child ſhall behave himſelf proudly againſt the ancient, and the baſe againſt the honourable* (*a*). Nay ſo unhappy was their caſe, that *they who led them cauſed them to err, and deſtroyed the way of their paths.* But it would be too much to collect all that he has ſaid on this melancholy theme. I only take theſe as being moſt in

(*t*) Iſai. xvii. 4, 5, 6.
(*u*) Iſai. xvii. 13.
(*x*) Iſai. i. 23.
(*y*) Iſai. i. 26.
(*z*) Iſai. iii. 2, 3.
(*a*) Iſai. iii. 4, 5.

in view, and ſhall add no more to them than one inſtance in the chapter before us: *The earth is defiled under the inhabitants thereof, becauſe they have tranſgreſſed the laws, changed the ordinances, and broke the everlaſting covenant* (*b*). This may well be called *their leanneſs*, and deſerved to be the lamentation of every one who *trembled for the fierce anger of the Lord.*

(2.) It may alſo ſignify the miſeries that were coming upon them. In this ſenſe it was threatned againſt the *Aſſyrian*, that GOD would *ſend among his fat ones leanneſs, and underneath his glory ſhould be kindled a burning, like the burning of a fire* (*c*). And thus it was to be in *Iſrael*, as appears by this chapter. Their riches were going: *Behold the Lord makes the earth empty, and makes it waſte, turning it upſide down, and ſcattering abroad the inhabitants thereof* (*d*). That expreſſion of *turning it upſide down* carries an alluſion too plain to be miſtaken, that it ſhould loſe what it was lately ſo full of, and become as much the reproach of other nations as it had been their envy. They might endeavour to keep their feet, by ſtaggering out of one project into another: but theſe meaſures are called their *reeling to and fro like a drunkard, till the earth was removed like a cottage; becauſe the tranſgreſſion thereof was heavy upon it, it ſhould fall and not riſe again* (*e*). And to all this you may add a dreadful circumſtance, that in the days of this Prophet they were frequently alarmed with invaſions. The word of the LORD came to him in the reign of *Ahaz* and *Hezekiah*. It was againſt the former of them, that the Kings of *Syria* and *Iſrael* came up to *vex Judah, and make a breach in it, and ſet up the ſon of Tabeal* (*f*): and in the reign of the latter, *Rabſhaketh* came with a powerful army. Now though each

(*b*) Iſai iii. 5.
(*c*) Iſai x. 16.
(*d*) Iſai. x. 1.
(*e*) Iſai. x. 20.
(*f*) Iſai. i. 1.

each of theſe attempts miſcarried, yet when the Prophet ſaw the people beginning to be miſerable, and not begin to be thoughtful, he might well cry out, *My leanneſs, my leanneſs!*

2. He tells us what the occaſion of this was, how it came to paſs that things had ſuch an unhappy run as he now complained of. It was not owing to the force of enemies, though they had reaſon in his day to be afraid of that: nor did it ariſe from any calamity brought upon them by the immediate hand of God. The earth did not fail of *yielding her increaſe*, nor the heavens of *dropping down their dew*. Though theſe are threatned as things that would be, yet they either had not fallen with their full weight upon them then; or if they had, he turns his eyes to ſomething more lamentable, worſe than the miſeries of drought and famine; what lay nearer his concern, and had the main guilt of bringing this *leanneſs* upon them: and this is, that *the treacherous dealers had dealt treacherouſly*; *yea, the treacherous dealers had dealt very treacherouſly*.

Firſt, He complains of a moſt formidable evil, and what there can be no guard againſt; treachery in thoſe perſons on whoſe integrity they had their chief dependence. It might be hard to know the men, but much harder to find out the ſchemes they acted by. This is a crime carried on with the faireſt pretences to honeſty and love; nothing could make a worſe appearance to human reaſon than a kingdom ſo divided againſt itſelf, as that of *Judah* now was.

The caſe that he thus deſcribes in his own nation, is parallel to what he had laid down as the judgment of *Egypt*. *Surely the Princes of Zoan are fools, the counſel of the wiſe Counſellors of Pharaoh is become bruti/h* (*g*). And what is the counſel that he thus animadverts on? That inſtead of adviſing their King, they were throwing flattery into his pride, and making

(*g*) Iſai. xix. 11.

ing him great with mere names, at the time that his intereſt was really ſinking in all the valuable branches of it; filling his ears with hereditary right, and the long race of Monarchs he had ſprung from: *How ſay ye to Pharaoh, I am the ſon of the wiſe, the ſon of ancient Kings? q. d.* What is this to the purpoſe? Does it make his reign more honourable to himſelf, or more happy to his people? Well might he add, *The Princes of Zoan are become fools, the Princes of Noph are deceived, they have alſo ſeduced Egypt, even they that are the ſtay of the tribes thereof. The Lord has mingled a perverſe ſpirit in the midſt thereof; and they have cauſed Egypt to err in every work, as a drunken man ſtaggers in his vomit* (*h*): *i. e.* The ſame wickedneſs has both made their heads giddy, and their way ſlippery.

Now that it ſhould be thus with *Egypt* is not ſo ſurpriſing: but that *Judah* ſhould fall into the moſt lamentable fate of the Heathen, that *in the land of uprightneſs they will deal unjuſtly, and not behold the majeſty of the Lord*, is what would touch the ſevereſt cares of every good man. But,

2. The complaint reaches farther; it is more than repeated, he ſays it over again with an aggravation; *yea, the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherouſly.* As if they knew no bounds to their hypocriſy, but had *left off to be wiſe, and to do good* (*i*). They will ſtick at nothing, but allow themſelves at the ſame time in the faireſt pretences and the fouleſt actions: they can at once make Religion their imitation and their jeſt: *With flattering lips, and with a double tongue do they ſpeak.* It was this that made *Jeremy* wiſh for *a lodging-place in the wilderneſs, that he might leave his people and go from them, becauſe they were all an aſſembly of treacherous men: every brother would ſupplant, and every neighbour walk with ſlanders; they would not ſpeak the truth, but had taught their tongues*

(*h*) Iſai xix. 13, 14. (*i*) Pſal. xxxvi. 4.

tongues to ſpeak lies, and wearied themſelves to commit iniquity (*k*).

Now theſe are ways that bring a certain calamity along with them. Though the perſons who are guilty may for a time defend themſelves, and deceive others, yet ſuch a connection of wickedneſs will be fatal at laſt. When *the Prophets propheſy falſly*, the ſnare begins there, *and the Prieſts bear rule by their means* (*l*): and it is ſo far from making any uneaſineſs at preſent, that *the people love to have it ſo*, but what will they do in the end thereof? If ſuch things are left only to their natural tendency, they will ſoon intangle a kingdom, and make every thing precarious that they once poſſeſſed.

You ſee the time is ſo full of this plain account that I have given you of the Prophet's words, that I have no room for an Application; inſtead of that, I will only endeavour to remove an objection that ſome may be ready to make againſt this good man's conduct, in a caſe ſo mingled as that of his country was.

The argument lies thus: "If *treacherous dealers* "are ſo dangerous, no regard can be had to any "mercies, eſpecially thoſe afar off. It ſignifies no- "thing what *ſongs* the *Jews* might fetch *from the ut-* "*termoſt parts of the earth*, when they had reaſon to "think themſelves undone at home by an extrava- "gant hypocriſy, where the *treacherous dealers were* "*dealing very treacherouſly*." Thus would unbelief plead from the ſad aſpect in *Judah* itſelf, to ſink the credit of a foreign victory.

I ſhall give you ſome few things in anſwer to this, and ſhew you, that ſuppoſing the caſe as lamentable as the Prophet had made it, yet it was nevertheleſs his duty to take part in thoſe *ſongs* that proclaimed a *glory to the righteous*.

1. He

(*k*) Jer. ix. 2. (*l*) Jer. v. 31.

1. He was hereby led to consider the perfections of God, who could as easily dissolve a *treachery*, as he had confounded an open force. These two are joined together; *With him is strength and wisdom, the deceived and the deceivers are his* (*m*): his *strength* can protect the *deceived*, his *wisdom* can baffle the *deceiver*. This is what they are exhorted to think of a little before their return from *Babylon*, there was a conflict of hope and danger in their case; and therefore the advice is, *Ye that have escaped the sword, go away, stand not still* (*n*). Here they are put upon fleeing, and yet they are charged to *remember the Lord afar off, and let Jerusalem come into their mind*; i. e. they were to sustain themselves with those things that God had done at a distance from them: and when their thoughts were rolling in his power and wisdom, they might turn towards *Jerusalem* with this argument, he that has *made bare his arm* in other places, can bring the salvation nearer and display himself amongst us. If *he is wise in heart* as well as *mighty in strength, no man can harden himself against him and prosper* (*o*).

2. The Prophet could not but know there was a certain intail of vengeance upon all *treachery*; that God *abhors the bloody and deceitful man*; that such do seldom *live out half their days*. Sometimes when this justice of Providence is delayed, it has proved a sore temptation even to good men. *Jeremy* complains, *Righteous art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee*; *yet let me talk with thee of thy judgments. Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? Wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherously? Thou hast planted them, and they have taken root*; *they grow, yea, they bring forth fruit: thou art near in their mouth, and far from their reins* (*p*). But he gets over this difficulty in the best manner; first, it puts

(*m*) Job xii. 16.
(*n*) Jer li. 50.
(*o*) Job ix. 4.
(*p*) Jer. xii. 1, 2.

him upon looking within and inquiring into his own ſincerity. *Thou, O Lord, knoweſt me; thou haſt ſeen me, and tried my heart towards thee* (*q*). And after this important caſe is clear, he goes on to tell what ſhall become of them, *pull them out like ſheep for the ſlaughter.* There is ſomething ſo provoking in the carriage of a deceiver, that the vengeance of God uſually condemns him to fall by his own arts, and periſh in the ſame way that he has made others do. We have two dreadful woes againſt ſuch people in this prophecy. The former you meet with, *Wo to them that ſeek deep to hide their counſel from the Lord, and their works are in the dark; and they ſay, Who ſees us? and who knows us? Surely your turning of things upſide down ſhall be eſteemed as potter's clay* (*r*). The other is, *Wo unto thee that ſpoileſt, and thou waſt not ſpoiled; and dealeſt treacherouſly, and they dealt not treacherouſly with thee. When thou ſhalt ceaſe to ſpoil, thou ſhalt be ſpoiled, and when thou ſhalt make an end to deal treacherouſly, they ſhall deal treacherouſly with thee* (*s*).

3. The Prophet was further ſenſible, that it would be a public mercy to have theſe *treacherous dealers* better known; that they might no longer have it in their power to *wear a rough garment, and deceive: The hypocrite is not always to reign, leſt the people be enſnared* (*t*). One of the mercies of that day, when the Goſpel will have *a free courſe and be glorified* (*u*), is, that *the vile perſon will no more be called liberal, nor the churl ſaid to be bountiful.* And ſometimes God, in a righteous juſtice, ſuffers people to go on in new crimes, that he may bring upon them the puniſhment of their old ones. It is thus that they *fill up the meaſure of their iniquities. Joab* was too neceſſary to *David*'s government, and early in the Revolution, and therefore had his life ſpared after a double

(*q*) Jer. xii. 3.
(*r*) Iſa. xxix. 15, 16.
(*s*) Iſa. xxxiii. 1.
(*t*) Job xxxiv. 30.
(*u*) Iſa. xxxii. 5.

double forfeiture, for *ſhedding the blood of war in peace, killing two men better than himſelf.* Nay, it is obſerved he was ſtanch to the crown in the rebellion of *Abſalom*, and yet he heads a party againſt the ſucceſſion of *Solomon* in favour of *Adonijah*, becauſe he was firſt in the line. Nay after this was overlooked, and he only condemned to a private life; he is quickly again in a plot, as if *his hoary hairs were not to go down to the grave in peace:* And therefore, though he runs *to the horns of the altar*, it was only to fall as a national ſacrifice there. When the hypocriſy of men is thus opened out, *The people ſhall no more ſtay themſelves upon him that ſmote them, but upon the Lord, the holy one of Iſrael in truth* (*x*).

4. The Prophet was ſure that the intereſt of GOD would prevail, and the happineſs of his people be eſtabliſhed. He was not without hopes of ſeeing a public turn in favour of *Sion*; but whether that came in his days or no, there was no cheating him of heaven: *the treacherous dealer* could not extend his policy ſo far.

We find a caſe very like this, that our Prophet had before him in the days of *Ezekiel*; *The ſpirit of the Lord lift him up, and brought him to the eaſt gate of the Lord's houſe, which looked eaſtward: and behold at the door of the gate were five and twenty men, among whom he ſaw Jaazaniah the ſon Azur, and Pelatiah the ſon of Benaiah, princes of the people* (*y*). And GOD tells him, *Son of man, theſe are the men that deviſe miſchief, and give wicked counſel in this city.* But when they are threatned with *falling by the ſword*, and being *judged in the border of Iſrael*, ſuch as they thought to enſnare are taken into the tendereſt protection; ſecured in peace of conſcience, and *the beauties of holineſs*. For, *though the inhabitants of Jeruſalem* would have baniſhed them, ſaying to them, *Get ye far from the Lord; unto us is the land given in poſſeſſion* (*z*); yet GOD promiſes that

(*x*) Iſa. x. 20.
(*y*) Ezek. xi. 1.
(*z*) Ezek. xi. 15.

they ſhall have the honour to *take away all deteſtable things and abominations thereof:* and he would give *them one heart, and put a new ſpirit within them; that they might walk in his ſtatutes, and keep his ordinances and do them; for they ſhould be his people, and he would be their God.*

And in this chapter our Prophet declares his hope of better times, that *the Lord would puniſh the Hoſt of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth; they ſhould be gathered in the pit, and ſhut up in the priſon: And then ſhall the moon be confounded and the ſun aſhamed, when the Lord ſhall reign in mount Sion, and before his ancients glorioufly* (*a*). Theſe are the bleſſings with which he deſigns to cloſe the confuſions his people are now lamenting. And, though *it is not for us to know the times and ſeaſons, which the father has reſerved in his own power*, yet every believer may take the advice given to *Daniel, to go his way, till the end be; for he ſhall reſt, and ſtand in his lot at the end of the days* (*b*).

(*a*) Ezek. xi. 21, 22, 23. | (*b*) Daniel xii. *ult.*

SERMON

SERMON XI.

THEOCRACY.

The Government of the JUDGES, considered and applied to the Revolution 1688.

Preached NOVEMBER 5, 1711.

JUDGES II. 18.

And when the Lord raised them up Judges, then the Lord was with the Judge, and delivered them out of the hands of their enemies all the days of the Judge: for it repented the Lord because of their groanings, by reason of them that oppressed them, and vexed them.

THIS Book gives us the first ages of *Israel* in the promised land, and what happened to them, after their settlement there, before they came to be governed by a succession of Kings? It is a sad account we have of them: *That the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the works of the Lord that he had done for Israel.* But *when all that generation were gathered unto their fathers, there arose another generation after them, who knew not the Lord,*

nor yet the works that he had done for Israel (*a*): and the national crime here charged upon them, is a proſtitution to the idols of the country after they had conquered the inhabitants: *They followed other gods, the gods of the people that were round about them, they bowed down themſelves unto them, and provoked the Lord to anger, they forſook the Lord, and ſerved Baal and Aſhtaroth* (*b*): this was a revolt ſo fooliſh and ungrateful, *that their defence departs from them* when they depart from it. For a long train of calamity and bondage was their conviction, that *it is an evil thing and bitter, thus to pervert their ways and caſt off the Lord God of their fathers.*

The following verſes, which tell us the miſery they brought upon themſelves, and the way that GOD took to ſave them upon their return to him, may be called an abridgment of the whole hiſtory: it gives us the ſum of that caſe which is afterwards drawn out quite through this Book. *The anger of the Lord was hot againſt Iſrael, and he delivered them into the hands of ſpoilers that ſpoiled them; he ſold them into the hand of their enemies round about, ſo that they could not any longer ſtand before their enemies; whitherſoever they went out, the hand of the Lord was againſt them for evil, as the Lord had ſaid, and as the Lord had ſworn unto them, and they were greatly diſtreſſed. Nevertheleſs, the Lord raiſed up Judges, which delivered them out of the hands of thoſe that ſpoiled them, and yet they would not hearken to their Judges, but went a whoring after other gods, and bowed themſelves unto them; they turned quickly out of the way which their fathers walked in, obeying the commandment of the Lord, but they did not ſo* (*c*). This round they kept of ſinning away their mercy, then repenting of that wickedneſs, then being delivered, and afterwards loſing their zeal when they got their liberty. *For it came to paſs, when the Judge was*

(*a*) Judg. ii. 7, 10.
(*b*) Judg. ii 12, 13.
(*c*) Judg ii. 14—17.

was dead, that they returned, and corrupted themſelves more than their fathers, in following other gods to ſerve them, and to bow down unto them; they ceaſed not from their own doings, nor from their ſtubborn way (*d*).

The verſe that I have taken out of this hiſtory, to be the ſubject of my diſcourſe, lies between their firſt miſery and their relapſe, and gives a noble account how divine and happy the way of their deliverance was; that *when the Lord raiſed them up Judges, then the Lord was with the Judge, and delivered them out of the hands of their enemies, all the days of the Judge: for it repented the Lord becauſe of their groanings, by reaſon of them that oppreſſed them, and vexed them.*

The deſign I am purſuing from theſe words, is to lay before you ſome few hints about that form of government that the *Jews* lived under when they were firſt planted in *Canaan*. And in doing this, I take all my information from the hiſtory that is delivered to us in the Word of God: and becauſe I foreſee it will carry me a conſiderable length, I ſhall therefore wave the uſual method of Sermons; and inſtead of giving you the Doctrine and Application aſunder, ſhall mingle the one with the other.

In deſcribing the government of the Judges, I would call in your attention to theſe ſeven heads.

I. The nature of the office.
II. The honourable character that it bears.
III. The perſons who were advanced to it.
IV. The antecedents, or the things that prepared the way of the Judge.
V. The credentials they came with to their ſtation.
VI. The qualifications of the men.
VII. The happineſs of the adminiſtration.

The Scripture hath given us a ſure light into all theſe particulars, ſo that under every one of them, I

(*d*) Judges ii. 19.

ſhall firſt lay down the caſe as it is in this hiſtory, and then ſhew you how we may improve it, and make it our own concern.

I. In diſcourſing of thoſe Judges that governed *Iſrael*, we are to begin with the nature of the office, and inquire what ſort of a Ruler the perſon was who wore the honour of this title: now it is plain there are two ſenſes attend that word in the holy Scriptures.

The *Firſt* and more ordinary work of a Judge was to try cauſes and determine between man and man: for this end they were directed by *Moſes*, to *make Judges and Officers in all their gates which the Lord gave them, through all their tribes, who ſhould judge the people with juſt judgment* (*e*): But,

Secondly, This word is uſed for ſomething more uncommon and out of the way; and that is pleading their cauſe againſt a public enemy; doing thoſe offices that in our day are comprehended under the title of a General: thus you find it, when the people came to *Samuel*, ſaying, *Give us a King to judge us*; they explain themſelves, *that our King may judge us, and go before us, and fight our battles* (*f*).

Both theſe interpretations do meet in the word when it is applied to God, becauſe in him it ſignifies not only a regard to the rules of equity, but a reſolution to make them effectual; *The Lord ſhall judge his people, and repent himſelf for his ſervants, when he ſeeth that their power is gone, and there is none ſhut up or left* (*g*); that is, he will both determine their right and procure it: each of theſe things come into the office of that perſon who was called a judge, in the extraordinary ſenſe that our text refers to: one deſign of his name was to lead them in the battle, as is plain from the firſt account we have of this inſtitution: *The Lord raiſed up Judges to deliver them, out of the hands of thoſe*

(*e*) Deut. xvi. 18.
(*f*) 1 Sam. viii. 6, 20.
(*g*) Deut. xxxii. 36.

those that spoiled them; and that he was also to inculcate the moral and devotional parts of the law, is evident from what follows: that *they would not hearken to their Judges, but went a whoring after other gods* (*b*); which supposes they were in some sense teachers of the people they governed.

From this account of the office, I think the deduction of these three things is very natural.

1*st*, That the chief design of the Judge was to fight their battles; and therefore,

2*dly*, It was no part of his work to make their laws: but only,

3*dly*, To impress the institutions that GOD himself had put them under.

1. The first and chief design of this officer was to fight their battles. And indeed this gave a revival to that dignity that GOD had conferred upon their ancestors; for though *Moses commanded them a law, even the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob*, yet besides that, he had the character of *King in Jeshurun, when the heads of the people, and the tribes of Israel were gathered together* (*i*): these two are what the martyr *Stephen* observes of him, yet *he was mighty both in word and deed* (*k*). And after him, *the Lord the God of the spirits of all flesh*, set another *man over them*, I mean *Joshua*, who succeeded *Moses* in his military capacity, though not in the legislature (*l*). Now as these Worthies died off, GOD raised up others to fetch them out of new dangers, that they might be *saved after the manner of Egypt*: he could have delivered them by the immediate executions of his own hand; their fighting was never necessary to him, he might have employed an angel, in the quality that one of them bore, *as a Captain of the host of the Lord* (*m*); but

(*b*) Judg. ii. 16, 17.
(*i*) Deut. xxxiii. 4, 5.
(*k*) Acts vii. 22.
(*l*) Numb. xxvii. 16, 17.
(*m*) Josh. v. 14.

but instead of that, he will have them rescued in the use of their own valour, and therefore gives them a Judge to lead out their forces to battle.

And this, my brethren, may shew us the way how a nation is to be saved; they must be active for it: we are not to expect that God will always deal with *the kingdoms that call not upon his name*, as he did with *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*; for as it is an unchristian spirit to fetch *fire from heaven*, so it is an inhuman one not to use fire upon earth; I mean, a zeal for *the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free* (*n*). In those days when they seldom wanted a miracle, yet it is by *resisting even unto blood*, that they broke the captivity they were under; from whence it is easy to observe that those doctrines have as little antiquity as truth, that tell a people, they are to meditate no escape for themselves, when Providence hath brought them under the weight of tyranny.

The Jews, in all those cases that are summed up in my text, were fairly conquered; and if the title of their new Sovereign is to be strengthned by it, we may add that it is oftentimes said, *the Lord sold them into the hands of such a King:* suppose now any one had, in those wretched days, told them that it was unlawful to use the necessary means for their liberty, that *to resist* the arbitrary *power* they were under was to incur *damnation*; for it is plain *those powers were of God*; and if they could not *obey* the decrees of idolatry, they were bound to be *passive*; that *God's selling them* gave all those tyrants a divine right to rule them: I say, had this language been used to them in their slavery, might they not have complained as *David* afterwards did, *they persecute him whom thou hast smitten, and talk to the grief of those whom thou hast wounded* (*o*)? But though the craftiness of some hath extolled this notion, yet we see by the record of antiquity in

(*n*) Gal. v. 1. (*o*) Psal. lxix. 26.

in my text, *that from the beginning it was not so:* for then, though they had been brought into subjection and paid tribute, and it was a yoke that GOD himself laid upon them, *yet the Lord raised them up Judges, and the Lord was with the Judge, and delivered them out of the hands of their enemies.*

2. The Judge had no power to make laws for them; no, this was done before, *the law came by Moses*, and he ordered every thing *according to the pattern shewed him in the mount:* the institutions they lived under were not the contrivance of that person from whom they received them; for he was only *faithful to him who appointed him, as a servant in the house* (*p*): though when he raised up a Judge, they all knew him to be an extraordinary officer, and that *the Spirit of the Lord had come mightily upon him*, yet this person could not alter *one jot or tittle* in the laws that either secured the peoples property or directed their worship: they were not to learn their duty from him; that was never GOD's design, in appointing a governor to fix any other authority over the conscience than his own; and therefore their King is ordered to *write him a copy of the law* that *Moses* delivered, and perhaps he is the only man that was obliged to transcribe it, for two reasons; as if GOD would have it impressed upon his memory more than others, and that in case of mal-administration, his own hand might be a witness against him: thus tender was he of his peoples liberties in the time of the *Jews*; and can we think them more unguarded under the Gospel? Hath Christianity destroyed so dear a privilege as this? If so, we can scarce say that it brings *peace upon earth*, or shews *a good-will towards men.* Yet,

3. The Judge might enforce the observation and execution of those laws they were under. It was their disobedience that made GOD give them up into the enemies hand; and therefore, when he raises a Deliverer,

(*p*) Heb. iii. 2.

liverer, he must be a reformer: that I think is plain from the verse that follows my text, *It came to pass, when the Judge was dead, they returned and corrupted themselves more than their fathers in following other gods*; which supposeth that they were restrained by his authority whilst he lived. And we have a more particular account of this in the government of *Deborah*; that she was *a Propheteſs, the wife of Lapidoth, and judged Iſrael*; there the word is to be taken in this sense, for her impressing the laws, because we do not find that she leads them out to battle, but *dwelt under the palm-tree of Deborah, between Ramah and mount Ephraim*; *and the children of Iſrael came up to her for judgment* (*q*).

And if this was the design on which God raised up a Judge, to fight their battles, not to make their laws, but only to inforce them; methinks the Revolution that begun *this day*, hath some resemblance of the office in it. The hand of heaven fitted up a man to deliver us, and we may say, *The Lord was with the Judge*; *from the blood of the ſlain, from the fat of the mighty, his ſword returned not empty*; and that he made no incroachments upon the law, but only revived it, is as plain, where the main grievance he removed was an enacting power where there was no law, and a dispensing power where there was: nor is it the least honour of that happy turn, that it begun with liberty to conscience, and correction to vice, that persons should have no restraint in serving God, and no protection in serving Satan: to this end the Act of Indulgence, and Reformation of Manners, received their life from the Royal Assent about the same time: so that we may be tempted to bring down this text into our own history, and say, *The Lord raiſed us up a Judge*; one that answered the design, by being *a repairer of the breach* in our Religion, and *a reſtorer of paths to dwell in* (*r*), in our Property.

II. The

(*q*) Judg. iv. 4, 5. (*r*) Iſai. lviii. 12.

II. The next thing is to obſerve what the ſcripture hath ſaid to the honour of this government, and here I will lay before you three things.

1*ſt*, That GOD always choſe the perſon.
2*dly*, That it was a ſolemn inſtance of his being their ruler; And
3*dly*, The only form of government that had his inſtitution.

1. The perſon who filled it, was one *raiſed up* by GOD himſelf: theſe are the expreſs words of the text. The voice of the people was only an after-concurrence, and generally the honour fixed upon thoſe that were moſt out of the way of fame; from whence we may draw in this great ſupport, that GOD will never want hands for the doing of his own work: we are ready to ſay, *By whom ſhall Jacob ariſe, for he is ſmall* (*s*)? The beſt noble blood is run out, thoſe that were the pillars of our conſtitution are gone; but if it is ſo, he can either find a hero or make one.

And ſurely the Revolution is a ſtanding memorial of this: the great hopes that the good people of this nation once had to preſerve their Religion and Laws, was a *bill of excluſion* to keep out a Papiſt from reigning; who being a bankrupt in his own conſcience, would be a plunderer of ours: but it pleaſed GOD that this brave attempt miſcarried, and the noble perſons who engaged in it, *overcame* in no other ſenſe, than *by the blood of the Lamb, and the word of their teſtimony, for they loved not their lives unto the death* (*t*). After that there were ſome deſigns to retrieve what was almoſt loſt under the duke of *Monmouth*, concerning whom many were ready to ſay, as *Samuel* did among the ſons of *Jeſſe*, Surely the LORD's anointed is

(*s*) Amos vii. 2. (*t*) Rev. xii. 11.

is before him: but when they were *looking on his countenance, and the height of his ſtature*, it is apparent *the Lord ſeeth not as man ſeeth; man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.* And there ſeemed to be a ſuſpenſe, moſt peoples eyes were hovering, not knowing where to fix, till Providence directed them to our late Deliverer with the voice of Heaven that fell upon *David, Ariſe, anoint him; for this is he.*

2. There is another thing that may be affirmed as the honour of this government by the Judges, that it was a ſolemn inſtance of God's being the ruler of that people: *The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Law-giver, the Lord is our King, he will ſave us* (*u*): and therefore it is notorious, that when they were for changing the form of their adminiſtration, God himſelf tells *Samuel, They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I ſhould not reign over them* (*x*). So that he had good authority to begin the firſt coronation with that reproach to their politics: *Ye have this day rejected the Lord your God, who himſelf ſaved you out of all your adverſities and your tribulations, and ye have ſaid unto him; Nay, but ſet a King over us.* And when they renewed the kingdom, he ſtill rubs them with the old fault, as if they could never hear it too often; *Ye ſaid unto me; Nay, but a King ſhall reign over us, when the Lord your God was your King* (*y*). And to confirm what he ſaid, he calls for *thunder and rain in the time of wheat-harveſt*, both to ſhew them the mind of heaven, and to give them an emblem of their new monarchy; which, at that time, had ſuch an impreſſion upon them, that they cried to *Samuel, Pray for thy ſervants that we die not; for we have added to all our ſins this evil to aſk us a King.* They would have made this change before, and put themſelves into an hereditary government:

(*u*) Iſa xxxiii. 22.
(*x*) 1 Sam viii. 7.
(*y*) 1 Sam. xii. 12.

ment: but *Gideon* refuſed it, for the reaſon I am now upon; *I will not rule over you, neither ſhall my ſon rule over you, the Lord ſhall rule over you* (z).

So that the Judges were more properly the LORD's Vicegerents than any of their Kings; as the Prophet ſays in this very caſe; *They had caſt off the thing that is good, they had ſet up Kings, but not by him, and Princes, but he knew it not* (a). This muſt refer either to the firſt King they had, which was *Saul*, or the revolt of the ten tribes under *Jeroboam*: but there is one reaſon, which in my opinion holds it to the former; for *Jeroboam* had more of a divine right to the government than *Saul* had: the deſign of advancing him came firſt from GOD himſelf by the Prophet *Ahijah*, before he or the people ever thought of it: but *Saul* had no more than Heaven's connivance: it was only *Samuel*'s having leave *to hearken to their voice*; in which ſenſe the words have a very eaſy ſound, *They made Kings, but not by me*; they did it in ſuch a way as *to caſt off that thing that is good*: and though it is true, they were called the *Lord's anointed*, yet it is plain they never were, nor ever could be, his repreſentatives in that ſenſe the Judges were; for every one of them was received as a new grant from heaven; as the Apoſtle obſerves, *He gave them Judges by the ſpace of four hundred and fifty years* (b).

3. This was the only form of government that had GOD's inſtitution; all the reſt can plead no more than permiſſion: but this was his own, brought about by the plain direction of Providence: he never called himſelf King of any people but the *Jews* in a political ſenſe; and the way of his ſhewing this, was by raiſing up the perſon that ſhould rule them.

How monſtrous a folly was it then in a people ſo happy, to deſtroy their peculiar, and put themſelves upon a level with the heathen world? One would wonder

(z) 1 Sam. viii. 23.
(a) Hoſ. viii. 3, 4.
(b) Acts xiii. 20.

wonder that it ſhould ever be given as a reaſon why they would have a King that they might be *like other nations*, when it was their glory to be unlike them: and perhaps therefore thoſe words carry a political ſenſe in them; *O Iſrael, thou haſt deſtroyed thyſelf*, quite ruined thy conſtitution, *but in me is thy help; I will be thy King: where is there any other that may ſave thee in all thy cities, and thy Judges, of whom thou ſaidſt, Give me a King and Princes* (*c*)? Thou waſt weary of thoſe officers that I appointed, and therefore *I gave thee a King in mine anger, and I took him away in my wrath.* This hath the Scripture told us for the honour of that government that the *Jews* were under during the adminiſtration of the Judges.

III. We are to inquire what perſons were raiſed to this office, whence he took them: now here the hiſtory is ſo expreſſed, that *he that runs may read it*; that GOD was never confined either to tribe, ſex, or quality.

1. He never confined himſelf to a tribe; it was not hereditary, nor any thing like it. *Moſes* came from *Levi*, *Joſhua* was of *Ephraim*, *Othniel*, (the firſt of the Judges, after they entered the promiſed land) was of *Judah*; and ſo little was primogeniture minded, that we are expreſly told of his being *Caleb's younger brother*. *Ehud* deſcended from *Benjamin*, *Baruch* was of *Napthali*, *Gideon* of *Manaſſeh*, *Tolah* of *Iſſachar*, *Jepthah* of *Gilead*, *Elon* of *Zebulun*, *Samſon* of *Dan*, *Eli* and *Samuel* were of *Levi*; and thus the office ended in the tribe where it begun. It was a long time before that came to be true, *that Judah prevailed above his brethren, for out of him was the chief ruler* (*d*).

2. He was not ſo much as limited to the ſex that ſeems fitter for this undertaking: there were ſome parts

(*c*) Hoſ. xiii. 9, 10. (*d*) 1 Chron. v. 2.

parts of their time when GOD himſelf gave this *honour to the weaker veſſel.* Thus happy was the adminiſtration under *Deborah*, ſhe appears at the head of their Revolution, to the memory of which noble act that ſong was penned: *The inhabitants of the valley ceaſed until that I Deborah aroſe, until I aroſe a mother in Iſrael* (*e*): She encouraged their nobles to rendezvous, by ſaying, *My heart is towards the governors of Iſrael that willingly offer themſelves among the people* (*f*); and, as a conſequence of that revolt, ſhe ſeems to have the ſovereignty, *He made the perſon that remains have dominion over the nobles among the people, the Lord made me have dominion over the mighty* (*g*). It is again obſerved in a particular way, that ſhe was amongſt them at their inſurrection, when they threw off *the yoke that they were not able to bear*, it was under her conduct: *The Princes of Iſſachar were with Deborah* (*h*); nay, indeed the great fame of that deliverance hung all one way, it was both contrived and executed by the ſame ſex, for as it begun with *Deborah*'s order to *Baruch*, ſo it ends with GOD's *ſelling Siſera into the hand of a woman*; who is ſaid to be *bleſt above women in the tent, for putting her hand to the nail, and her right hand to the workman's hammer, and ſmiting off his head, when ſhe had pierced and ſtricken through his temples:* ſo richly can our GOD adorn perſons with thoſe qualities that are not the ordinary diſpoſals of nature; when he fits them for their work, *the weak ſhall ſay, I am ſtrong.*

It hath pleaſed him to ſet a Princeſs over us now, who had the firſt of theſe characters, who appeared at the head of a generous army, and encouraged *the governors of Iſrael, when they willingly offered themſelves*, and if what is yet unimitated in *Deborah*'s glory be reſerved for the ſame perſon, ſhe may at laſt ſay, *O my ſoul, thou haſt troden down ſtrength!*

(*e*) Judges v. 7.
(*f*) Judges v. 9.
(*g*) Judges v. 13.
(*h*) Judges v. 15.

How such things as these will be brought about, we cannot tell; but the method that *Jael* took to make an end of *Sisera*, was upon the foot of a treaty, crying, *Come in my Lord, and covering him with her mantle.* The song saith, *He asked water, and she gave him milk, she brought forth butter in a lordly dish:* This was only to stupify him, that she might take the fairer blow; for *at her feet he bowed, he fell, where he bowed, there he fell down dead* (*i*).

3. He did not always take the persons who seemed to be most likely. Thus *Gideon* is called from *the threshing-floor*, though *his family was poor in Manasseh, and himself the least in his father's house.* Yet these objections were over-ruled by a cast of the Divine Majesty, for *the Lord looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel* (*k*). *Jephthah* is fetched from the country, whither his brethren had banished him, and from being denied the least place in the family, he comes to have the greatest in the nation: *Samson* was the unexpected produce of his mother, who had been barren; and as nature was over-ruled in his birth, it seems to be out-done in his life.

This was their government for above four hundred years, and though it is a form that no other people came under, yet there are some turns in the affairs of our nation that may be thought to look like it: when God calls in help from afar, and *changeth the times and the seasons*, when he appears to *rule in the kingdoms of men, by giving them to whomsoever he will*; that scripture comes true in our history, *He hath raised up the righteous man from the east, and called him to his foot, gave the nations before him, and made him rule over Kings; he pursued them, and passed safely, even by the way that he had not gone with his feet* (*l*): and when he strengthens the hands of a woman against one

(*i*) Judges v. 25, 27.
(*k*) Judges vi. 14.
(*l*) Isa. xli. 2, 3.

one who never had the courage of a man, it is raiſing Providence above the common rules that it goes by; and this we had the pleaſure lately to ſee, that what the *French* call a *ſalique law*, was ſubmitting to a neceſſity that hath no law: and the ſex that muſt not rule them, had gone ſo far as to conquer them. Such Revolutions as theſe are the picture of Chriſtianity itſelf, that comes not *of the will of the fleſh, nor of the will of man, nor of blood, but of God.*

IV. We are to inquire into the antecedents of this honour, or thoſe things that prepared the way for raiſing up a Judge; and theſe are chiefly three, oppreſſion, reformation, and prayer.

1. One thing that led on God's giving them a Judge was the oppreſſion of their enemies. This is plain from the words of my text, where it is brought in as a reaſon why *he was with the Judge, and delivered them; for that it repented the Lord becauſe of their groanings, by reaſon of thoſe that oppreſſed them, and vexed them:* though he gave them up into the hands of a fierce and cruel King on purpoſe to ſuffer hardſhip, yet he had always a reſentment of the tyranny itſelf; which ſhews that he doth *not chaſten us for his own pleaſure, but for our profit.*

I need not lead you through the particular miſeries they felt from the *Moabites*, the *Amorites*, the *Edomites*, and the *Philiſtines:* ſome of them were ſo preſſing that *the highways were unoccupied, the travellers walked in by-ways* (*m*); and the people were ſo much out of poſture for their own defence, that *there was not a ſpear or ſhield ſeen among forty thouſand in Iſrael: Gideon was threſhing the wheat in the night-time for fear of the Midianites* (*n*). And perhaps there are two reaſons why the inhabitants of thoſe lands uſed to deal ſo hardly with them. One was be-

(*m*) Judges v. 6, 8. | (*n*) Judges vi. 11.

cauſe they looked upon themſelves as a conquered people, who had loſt their country to the *Jews*; and the other, becauſe the religion of *Iſrael* was ſo different from what the *Canaanites* had been uſed to: and the quarrel founded upon theſe two reſentments was ſo dreadful, that it was time for GOD to raiſe up Judges.

It is eaſy to ſee that theſe are the things that procured ſo much danger to *Britain:* the prodigious ignorance of the wild *Iriſh*, their hatred of us both as *Engliſhmen* and Proteſtants, had made them in ſeveral reigns a certain tool of tyranny. The dreadful maſſacre in 1641 recommended their poſterity to the deſign that was carrying on in 1688. And they whoſe parents had been famous for the ſlaughter of two hundred thouſand in cold blood, were the perſons for whoſe ſake the King thought fit to diſpenſe with the known laws of the land; as our Saviour ſaid of the *Jews*, *They were witneſſes to themſelves, that they were the children of them that killed the Prophets.* That we had been under the ſeverities of a party who neither loved juſtice, nor knew mercy, is plain enough: private aſſaſſinations, the more public control of bloody Judges and infamous Juries; the bullying of parliaments, the raiſing of armies without a war, the eſtabliſhing of an high-commiſſion-court, for thoſe perſons to govern the conſciences of others, who had none of their own: theſe and a thouſand more illegal methods, *filled up the meaſure of their iniquity*; till the fulneſs of their iniquity had the ſame effect with that of the *Canaanites*, that *the land ſpued them out, and made them wanderers among the nations.*

2. Another thing that led on the great bleſſing of a Judge was their Reformation; for as it was guilt that made *their rock to ſell them, and the Lord to ſhut them up*, ſo there muſt be *a returning to him from whom they had back-ſlidden: They put away their idols* which

which had coſt them ſo dear; and as they had changed their liberties for their corruptions, they now make the exchange back again: and indeed till there is ſomething of this temper, till a people have ſome diſſolution of their impenitency, it is pity they ſhould be delivered; the mercy will be loſt upon them *if their uncircumciſed heart is not humbled, and they accept of the puniſhment of their iniquity.*

Some of you may remember, that it was from ſuch a dawn as this that our Revolution grew *more and more unto a perfect day:* though for ſeveral years the whole cry of the pulpit had been little elſe but obedience to the King, and perſecution to their Proteſtant brethren, yet they were then as *Iſrael* ſhall be when they *turn to the Lord, the vail was taken off* from their hearts and eyes: they came to find, that by indulging *the wrath of man*, they had loſt *the righteouſneſs of God*; ſo that the world hath been told in a very public way, that Archbiſhop *Sancroft* himſelf was the perſon who propoſed a comprehenſion with the Non-conformiſts. And it is plain that he, and the reſt of the Biſhops who were ſent to the *Tower*, declared, "That they "were ready to come to any accommodation with "their Diſſenting brethren in a parliamentary way." Then God *ſhewed them their error, that they had exceeded, and opened their ears to diſcipline:* and theſe ſentiments of peace and union led the way to our deliverance, from whence it need be no wonder to you, that they who are for widening the difference with Proteſtants, and contracting that with Papiſts, are ſo much out of love with the work of *this day*, that *they have in their hearts appointed to themſelves a Captain to return to Egypt.*

3. Another introduction to their having a Judge, was *the ſpirit of prayer and ſupplication.* God *heard their cry*, he would not be ſilent to them, as they had been to him; but firſt opened the heavens to let in the petition, and then *bowed them* to come down and

anſwer it. This is one of the Chriſtian's weapons, and it is what he ſhall never be diſarmed of: it was thus that *Jacob had power* firſt *with God*, and then *with man*. You have ſeveral examples of this in the hiſtory before you; and as our nation hath applied it, ſo I hope they may do it again.

You know how long it was the deſire of thoſe excellent perſons, who had any ſenſe of the common danger, that GOD would raiſe up a SAVIOUR; and thoſe cries at length came *into the ears of the Lord God of ſabbaoth*; for if *an unjuſt Judge, who neither fears God, nor regards man*, is to be moved with intreaty, you may be ſure that *the Lord will ſpeedily avenge the cauſe of his elect*: it was with this requeſt that many of our Worthies breathed out their laſt, commending the cry of their blood to GOD's juſtice, and the deſolations of this kingdom to his mercy. This they had begged from heaven, and argued with men, and at the end gave up their ſouls in good wiſhes to the cauſe for which they ſuffered; and what they prayed for upon the ſcaffold, they went to plead over again *under the altar*.

Nor was the cry in vain; for the earth had ſcarce well drank in their blood, ere GOD revived the puniſhment of *Cain* upon him that ſhed it, to make him *a fugitive and vagabond on the earth*, under a continual fear that *every one that found him would ſlay him*.

V. We ſhall conſider the credentials of thoſe perſons who were to be Judges: what it was that muſt ſatisfy the people of their having a commiſſion: now under this head it may not be amiſs to produce three things;

1*ſt*, That ſometimes their authority was not publicly received at the beginning; yet,

2*dly*, It never failed of having a general approbation, ſooner or later. And,

3*dly*, That

3dly, That which led on the popular ſubjection to them, was uſually ſome mighty action that GOD enabled them to do: this drew in the heart and zeal of the kingdom, to *bleſs* the Perſon who *came to ſave them in the name of the Lord.*

1. It is plain that their commiſſion was not always underſtood at the beginning; thus it happened with *Moſes*, as he himſelf foretold it would be, when he affirmed *the Lord God of their fathers had ſent him*, they would not believe, but ſaid, *What is his name?* Nay, when he begun to act for them before, he did it by virtue of that authority, which was more revealed under a commiſſion forty years after; *he then delivered an Iſraelite, and ſmote an Egyptian*, of which the martyr *Stephen* gives this account; *he ſuppoſed his brethren would have underſtood, how that God by his hand would deliver them, but they underſtood not* (*n*). And thus it was with *Samſon*, who *ſlew a lion* in private, on whom *the Spirit of the Lord began to move at times, in the camp between Zorah and Eſhtaol* (*o*); but by the ſtupidity and indolence of the people, they did not ſeem to take the meaning of heaven in lodging ſo great a ſtock of nature in one man.

Thus does Providence love to keep a bleſſing ſecret till the day of its *ſhewing to Iſrael:* as it is obſerved by thoſe who wrote the hiſtory of the late King, "That the court of *England* deſigned to intangle him "by his affections to the virtuous Princeſs, whom he "married; but as he then declared he would not "treat of that, until the affairs of the States were "adjuſted, and that he ſcorned to ſell his country "for a wife;" ſo we ſee how much farther GOD deſigned it; that inſtead of making that marriage the ſale of one country, it proved the redemption of two: ſo little do we know what Providence means by thoſe turns that appear with no great ſhew at preſent.

(*n*) Acts vii. 25. (*o*) Judg. xiii. 25.

2. Though the credentials of the Judge might be concealed for a time, yet ſooner or later they were to have the univerſal approbation of the people. Not but that there was a number of diſaffected perſons among them, *murmurers and complainers*, *walking after their own luſts:* therefore it is ſaid in the verſe before my text, that *they would not hearken to their Judges, but went a whoring after other gods:* it grieved ſome of them, that a Man was come to ſeek the welfare of *Iſrael*.

But when I ſpeak of the approbation that the people gave, I have no regard to thoſe whoſe concurrence was not worth having: they who had felt the bitterneſs of captivity, and *lamented after the Lord*, took the proper ways of receiving a Judge, and declaring the value they had for ſo public a mercy: how readily did many of their tribes attend *Barak*, and threw in their ſeveral capacities to that good cauſe: *Out of Machir came down governors*; *and out of Zebulun, they that handled the pen of the writer*; *Gilead abode beyond Jordan, and Dan remained in ſhips*; *Aſher continued on the ſea-ſhore, and abode in his breaches*; *Zebulun and Naphtali were a people that jeoparded their lives unto the death in the high places of the field* (*p*): and what a *curſe* is there upon *Meroz?* it was *the angel of the Lord* that ſaid, *Curſe ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof, becauſe they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord againſt the mighty* (*q*).

3. That which led on this popular eſteem, was uſually ſome mighty action that GOD enabled them to do. *Moſes* fixt his character among them by *ſigns and wonders:* this left the people out of doubt, and gave them hopes in a little time of being out of danger: and thus *Joſhua*'s authority was recognized; as *Moſes* begun to have the full reputation of a Captain at the *Red ſea*, ſo did *Joſhua* at the waters of *Jordan*. We do not read that the children of *Iſrael* had any more

(*p*) Judg. v. 16—18. (*q*) Judg. v. 23.

more regard to *Ehud*, than to make him the meſſenger of their ſubjection to *Eglon* the King of *Moab*; *they ſent a preſent by him*, but he had *an errand* beyond that, *a meſſage of God unto him*, which he delivered at the point of his *dagger*. This indeed gave the *Jews* a public ſenſe of the office he entered into: after that, *he blew the trumpet in the mount of Ephraim, and the children of Iſrael went down with him from the mount, and he before them* (*r*).

And that Providence took theſe advances in the mercy of *this day*, is a thing freſh within our memory: Though ſome who cried to our Deliverer for help, would have had him left what he came for unfiniſhed: yet there were others who had no mind to *do the work of the Lord ſo deceitfully:* as God bleſt his arms to make the throne vacant, ſo there were the beſt voices of the nation, that he that emptied it ſhould fill it: Thus by degrees did *all oppoſition fall before him, till he became our King and Governor.*

VI. Another thing that we are to inquire into, is the qualification or endowments of that perſon whom God raiſed up to be a Judge: there were three things that none in this office ever miſſed of:

1*ſt*, A military ſpirit, the courage and wiſdom of a ſoldier.

2*dly*, A ſincere love for his country.

3*dly*, The true principles of Religion. They have had Kings who wanted all theſe, but none of their Judges ever failed to have them in a glorious degree: and the reaſon is plain, becauſe in this government God himſelf furniſhed out the men, and he always took care that they ſhould be equal to their ſervice.

1. A Judge never wanted the true ſpirit of a ſoldier; courage againſt an enemy, compaſſion to a ſubject,

(*r*) Judg. iii. 27.

ject, and wisdom to guide and temper each of them. This is what you will find inscribed upon every one of their histories, that they were *mighty men of valour*, not softned to danger by luxury, or hardned to their people by flattering words; and though it is true none of them could boast of his descent from a long race of Kings, yet they had a glory above it; not taking the remains of a dignity which others had left them, but carrying the whole stock in themselves: and though they wanted what we call royal blood, yet that was made up in a divine spirit, which shewed them to be sent by the KING of Kings. They never thought *Gideon* the worse for being fetched out of *a threshing-floor*; his hands were noble enough to do the last execution upon two Princes and two Kings; for when he had *slain Oreb upon the rock Oreb, and Zeeb at the wine-press of Zeeb, he and his three hundred men went after Zebah and Zalmunna, faint, yet pursuing them* (*s*): they would rather lose their food than their prey.

This is a spirit so essential to government, that though the *Jews* desired a King, they always understood it in his character that he should be one to *lead them out, and fight their battles:* not a meer rake in robes; but one of whom they might say, as *Jotham* did of *Gideon, My father fought for you, and ventured his life far, and delivered you out of the hand of Midian* (*t*). It is true many of their Kings were brave men, but I do not remember one of them that had always in him the spirit of a Judge. *David* did the noblest acts among them, and yet he was guilty of indulging his folly at *Jerusalem, when the ark of God, and the army of Israel abode in tents.* An instance of this neglect and softness is not once to be found in any of the Judges. Though we have but a short account of some of them, yet there is nothing unworthy of the great name they bore.

The

(*s*) Judg. viii. 5. (*t*) Judg. ix. 17.

The application of this to our Revolution is eaſy enough: when it pleaſed GOD to give us a Prince who had an early diſdain of what the Scripture ſaith *deſtroys Kings* (*u*). The great events of his battles with the *French*, had ſent over his name long before we had his perſon; he had no Prieſts in pay to flatter him, and force a reputation; no, his army was a proper college for that, and every ſoldier had a better tongue to proclaim him: we juſt wanted ſuch a one, who had been *a man of war from his youth*, to help and head the nation; to unbind a people who were brought into ſo much danger by a ſtanding Army and a fawning Clergy.

2. The Judge was always a hearty lover of his country. Never could any of them be guilty of making their court to an enemy, or putting themſelves under a foreign yoke; all their actions and cares were directed this way, that *Iſrael might rejoice in him that made him, and the children of Sion be joyful in their King* (*x*). And this may help us to underſtand ſome paſſages in *Samſon*'s life, more in his favour than they could be in an ordinary perſon: I will but mention one, and that is, his ſeeking a wife among the *Philiſtines*, which his parents were both ſurpriſed and troubled at, becauſe there was a divine command againſt it: but ſaith the text, *his father and mother knew not that it was of the Lord, to ſeek an occaſion againſt the Philiſtines* (*y*): And this myſterious alliance led him into a twenty years quarrel with that nation, till they themſelves called him *a deſtroyer of their country*.

Some of their Kings had more of an indifferency to the good of *Iſrael*; and either through a fear to thoſe abroad, or a deſire to be abſolute at home, neglected the improvement of a conqueſt. Thus does *Saul* ſpare *Agag* the King of the *Amalekites*, againſt the

(*u*) Prov. xxxi. 3.
(*x*) Pſal. cxlix. 2.
(*y*) Judg. xiv. 4.

the plain voice of heaven; but *Samuel* does otherwiſe, who was the laſt of the Judges, and had yet in him the ſpirit of the office, though he had laid down the form: nor could there be a nobler concluſion to the public actions of the Judges, than to *hew* a tyrant in pieces *before the Lord:* it was the very laſt thing he did in that character.

Thus treacherous was *Ahab* to the intereſt of his own country; firſt, by ſubmitting to the King of *Syria*'s claim, who ſent him that meſſage: *Thy ſilver and thy gold are mine, thy wives and thy children are mine* (z); how mean, and below the dignity of a Prince was it to return that anſwer, *My Lord, O King, according to thy ſaying, I am thine, and all that I have* (a)? Perhaps you may think that this was owing to the neceſſity of his affairs; but you find the ſame ſneaking cowardice when matters had taken a turn in his favour: he beats the *Syrian* army twice, ſo that *Ben-hadad* is in the diſtreſs to *run away on foot*; and yet afterwards he recovered by peace what he had loſt in war. One would think *Ahab* under an infatuation to enter into any terms with the man that had bullied him, that had diſpoſed of his kingdom, as if he had ſome pretender to ſend thither, that he had vowed the ruin of *Samaria*, and dared the God of *Iſrael* himſelf, calling him *the God of the hills, and not of the valleys:* and yet *Ahab* enters into a diſhonourable treaty, which was founded upon a partition of their conqueſts: *Ben-hadad ſaid unto him, The cities which my father took from thy father I will reſtore, and thou ſhalt make ſtreets for thee in Damaſcus, as my father made in Samaria. Then ſaid Ahab, I will ſend thee away with this covenant* (b). Could any thing be of more dangerous conſequence to *Iſrael?* It was not mere pity and good nature, for at the ſame time that he is ſo tender to an enemy, he is perſecuting the Prophets

(z) 1 Kings xx. 3.
(a) 1 Kings xx. 4.
(b) 1 Kings xx. 34.

Prophets of the LORD: and no wonder then that GOD sends one of his servants with this message; *Because thou hast let go out of thy hand a man whom I appointed to utter destruction, therefore thy life shall go for his life, and thy people for his people* (*c*): and these were not mere words of terror, for the new peace held but a little time; we only read that *they continued three years without war between Syria and Israel* (*d*); but in the third year it breaks out again, and *Ahab* loseth his life by the very Prince whom once he had pardoned.

The Judges never made such abatements, but asserted the rights of *Israel* against all the monarchs upon earth: how noble was *Jephthah*'s message to the King of the *Ammonites*, *The Lord God of Israel hath dispossessed the Amorites from before his people Israel, and shouldst thou possess it? Wilt not thou possess that which Chemosh thy god giveth thee to possess? So whomsoever the Lord our God shall drive out from before us, them will we possess* (*e*).

3. The Judges were always good men, persons of true Religion. Not that they were without the infirmities of human nature: *Gideon* desired the ear-rings of the people, and he *made an ephod of it, which thing became a snare to him, and his house* (*f*). *Jephthah*'s vow was so rash, and intangled others besides himself, that it can scarce be defended. *Samson* let *his* heart be *deceived by a woman*, and revealed a secret that GOD had lodged with him; and after he had violated his trust, it was in vain for him to *go out and shake himself, as at other times, for God was departed from him.*

But you are not to take the character of them, or of any good man, by the success of a temptation upon them, but from the main tendency of their lives. Now notwithstanding these blemishes, yet *they have obtained a good report.* You find them among the Worthies

(*c*) 1 Kings xx. 42.
(*d*) 1 Kings xxii. 1.
(*e*) Judg xi. 23, 24.
(*f*) Judg. viii. 27.

Worthies that begin with *righteous Abel:* Though the Apoſtle had almoſt filled his argument and time with the Patriarchs, yet he takes care that the reputation of the Judges be not quite loſt; and therefore ſays, that *Gideon, Barak, Samſon, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and the Prophets, through faith ſubdued kingdoms, wrought righteouſneſs, and obtained promiſes* (*g*).

And indeed theſe are the fitteſt to be employed in a government, for though a bad Ruler, a Heathen, a Tyrant may be called *the Lord's anointed*, yet it is with an undeniable harſhneſs in the ſound. Theſe two characters can ſcarce come together without confuſion; that a man ſhould repreſent God in his office, and yet ſerve nothing but Satan in his life. How unhappy is it, when for his ſtation he is called a God, and yet his actions make every one take him for a Devil? The civil titles of a Prince never come off the tongue ſo clean as when they are given to *a man after God's own heart*. There the names of ſacred Majeſty, gracious Sovereign, Defender of the Faith, Chriſtian King, and God's Vicegerent, have ſome meaning in them, they are not mere *ſwelling words of vanity*. Theſe were the qualifications of the Judges, which every perſon brought along with him to that office: he had always courage to defend the people from a foreign power, no inclination to betray them to it; and he ruled, as *they that rule over men*, over creatures equally rational and immortal with themſelves ſhould do, *by juſtice, and in the fear of the Lord.*

That theſe endowments were eminently found in our late Sovereign, is an argument too much for the time, but it lies abroad in his hiſtory. His being a ſoldier is enough out of the queſtion, our enemies were never capable of doubting that: that he had the intereſt of *Great Britain* at heart, appears by the hazards that he run, the honourable alliances that he made againſt an exorbitant power, that always hath been,

(*g*) Heb. xi. 33.

been, and always will be, our greateſt danger; and the regard he ſhewed to Religion, appeared in the whole of his conduct, and by the particular care he took to advance Miniſters of the beſt learning and probity; men famous for what they had done in the pulpit; well knowing, that the main credit of one *intruſted with the Goſpel*, is to be *a workman*, not *a tool*: nor is there any thing that will better ſecure them from being *aſhamed*, than *rightly dividing the Word of truth*.

VII. The happineſs of this adminiſtration is but a natural conſequence from all that I have ſaid: we may well ſay, *Bleſſed is the people that is in ſuch a caſe; yea, happy is the nation whoſe God is the Lord:* but, beſides what you have heard, there are three things that will tell you the felicity of being governed by the Judges: they were always ſure of ſucceſs; never laid any burdens upon the people; and under no temptation of amaſſing great wealth to themſelves.

1. The nation was always ſure of ſucceſs in the concern that the Judge led them to. Though they had the fatigue of a war, yet it was without its uncertainty: you never read that any of them failed of conqueſt; and indeed the proſpect they had of getting the better, aroſe from God's own choice of the men, and avowance of the cauſe: his *raiſing up* a perſon was a preſage that he would never leave him, and therefore they are joined in the words of my text, when *the Lord raiſed them up Judges, the Lord was with the Judge*. Thus when *Ehud* had ſlain *Eglon*, he gave the enemy ſo full a blow, that *the land did reſt eighty years*; and in *Deborah*'s ſtory it is ſaid, that *the hand of the children of Iſrael proſpered till they had deſtroyed Jabin King of Canaan* (*h*). *Midian was ſubdued before the children of Iſrael, ſo that they lifted up their heads no more, and the country was in quietneſs forty years in the days of Gideon.*

We

(*h*) Judg. iii. 30.—iv. 24.

We do not find that any of them left the work incomplete but *Samson*, for he himself died in captivity: now this was not from any deficiency in him, but a wretched lowness of spirit in the people. We never read of their attending him to battle; his victories were all personal: the *Jews* had not yet retrieved their sense of liberty: instead of following the strongest leader that ever they had, *Three thousand of them came to bind him, and deliver him into the hand of the Philistines:* their plea for it was a very slavish one, *Knowest thou not that the Philistines are rulers over us? What is this that thou hast done unto us* (*i*)*?* Which was a sort of charging rebellion against him. Now, though he could as easily have *broke* the argument, as he did the *cords*; yet he makes no other terms with them, than that they would *not fall upon him themselves.* Such people as these were not fit for liberty; leaving them in bondage, is but suiting their condition to their temper: and therefore we read no more of him, than that he should *begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines.*

We cannot now have the same assurance of success that they had, this was the peculiar of that government: and I wish the case of our Revolution could be better applied to any other history of the Judges, than what I have last mentioned: but it is not to be denied, with what toil of Empire his late Majesty reigned amongst us.

That there were some to cramp him in his measures, and who would *not know the things of their peace in that their day*, the length of this war does abundantly tell us: so that the parallel between him and *Samson* seems but too just, that they would *bind him with new cords*, what were never used to his predecessors: though blessed be GOD it held also in another case, that he did us the greatest service at last, by bringing about the Protestant Succession, which we hope hath given

(*i*) Judg. xviii. 11.

given us a better ſecurity than any thing he did before; ſo that in this he expired as *Samſon* did, in the fulneſs of ſervice and fame: for *the dead that he ſlew at his death, were more than thoſe that he ſlew in his life.*

2. Another happineſs of this government was, the ſtate which attended it laid no burden upon the people: there was no ſuch thing as the nation groaning under a royal pomp: it was reckoned a judgment that *their King ſhould take their ſons, and appoint them for his horſemen, to run before his chariots, and make them captains over thouſands, and hundreds, and fifties, and tens; and make them ear his ground, and reap his harveſt, and prepare his inſtruments of war; and that their daughters ſhould be confectionaries, cooks and bakers* (*k*). Theſe are ſo far from being burdens now, that people catch at them as ſo many honours; but they had not ſo much as a court under the Judges, to give their ſuperiority the leaſt air of oppreſſion to the people: ſo little did they underſtand the ceremonial part of dominion, that we read upon *Saul*'s being King, *he came after the herd out of the field* (*l*): therefore it is ſo often hinted as the felicity of thoſe times, that *there was no King in Iſrael, but every one did what was right in his own eyes:* not that they lived in a lawleſs way, but there was nothing like prerogative to intrench on the liberty that God had given.

And thus they continued, as *Paul* ſays, *about the ſpace of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the Prophet:* that it was not ſo afterwards, is plain from their hiſtory: there was foundation enough for the diſtinction that *Solomon* made, *A Prince that wants underſtanding is a great oppreſſor; but he that hates covetouſneſs ſhall prolong his days* (*m*).

3. The laſt thing that I ſhall mention among the felicities of that government was, that the Judge could

(*k*) 1 Sam. viii. 11—13.
(*l*) 1 Sam. xi. 5.
(*m*) Prov. xviii. 16.

be under no temptation of amaſſing great wealth to himſelf; becauſe as his office was not hereditary, ſo he had no neceſſity of laying in the materials of a future ſtate to his family: the tyranny of ſome thrones hath been the growth of ſeveral ages: *the myſtery of iniquity* took time to work up to what it now is: but this was impoſſible in the reign of the Judges: becauſe the honour of the family ſunk with the perſon who had it.

And the circumſtances into which God was pleaſed to caſt our late King were not unlike to this: as he had none to bear his name in the world, ſo there was no temptation to make any incroachments either upon the peoples treaſures, or their liberties. It is true, the intail of the crown was upon the heirs of his body, after thoſe of her preſent Majeſty: but that was a thing out of all proſpect; and thus God fitted his condition to the greatneſs of his ſoul, and put him into the full ſcope of his temper, to act as if the Proteſtant Religion, and the Liberties of *Europe*, and in particular the honour of *Great-Britain*, were to be his heirs, to enjoy all that he had got or could leave: for this end he nobly refuſed the propoſals that were made to him of leaving out the Queen or the Houſe of *Hanover* from a claim to theſe kingdoms, though the temptation of making him eaſy and proſperous was uſed to perſuade him.

Thus have I given you an account of the beſt government that ever was in the world, on a day that brought us to one of the beſt that ever we had in *England:* it hath been my endeavour in the hiſtory of the *Jews*, and the application that was made of it to our own caſe, to keep the hand of God in your view: it is thus that you are to regard the Revolution, as the conduct of a mighty Providence; this will both ſanctify your value for what is paſt, and hold on your dependence for bleſſings yet to come: for he who hath

hath *ſhewn us his ſalvation*, may *put on ſtrength as in the ancient days*; here is our great ſecurity in every new danger: it is he that can diffuſe a ſpirit of unity and reſolution in the time we moſt need it; look to him then for the birth of that promiſe which refers to the MESSIAH, and we may challenge it when *the faith that he delivered to the Saints* is in any danger. *This man ſhall be the peace when the Aſſyrian ſhall come into our land, and when he ſhall tread in our palaces: then will we raiſe againſt him ſeven ſhepherds, and eight principal men, and they ſhall waſte the land of Aſſyria with the ſword, and the land of Nimrod in the entrances thereof; thus ſhall he deliver us from the Aſſyrian when he cometh into our land, and when he treadeth within our borders* (*n*).

(*n*) Mic. v. 5, 6.

SERMON XII.

Steadineſs in RELIGION,

Recommended from the Example of DANIEL under the Decree of DARIUS.

Preached MARCH 23, 1711-12.

DANIEL VI. 10.

Now when Daniel knew that the writing was ſigned, he went into his houſe: and his windows being open in his chamber towards Jeruſalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God as he did aforetime.

YOU have here the great example of a man who ventured all his intereſt in this world to preſerve it in another; and run the hazard of *loſing his life*, that he might *ſave it to life eternal*. The words conſiſt of two parts:

I. The difficulty he was brought into *when he knew the writing was ſigned.*

II. His behaviour upon it: *he went into his houſe, and the windows being open in his chamber to-*

wards Jeruſalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God as he did aforetime.

I. I will give you ſome few thoughts of the caſe itſelf, that made his duty ſo dangerous to him: and if you would fetch this from its original, you will find in it theſe two things;

The honour that had been conferred upon *Daniel:* And,

The uneaſineſs that it gave ſome great men at that court.

1. We are told of his advancement: *It pleaſed Darius to ſet over the kingdom an hundred and twenty Princes which ſhould be over the whole kingdom, and over theſe three preſidents, of whom Daniel was the firſt* (*a*). Where you ſee that King was unconfined in the diſtribution of his favours, and reſolved never to loſe the ſervice of an honeſt man for the ſake of any varieties in religion. He underſtood his intereſt better, and knew how to employ thoſe of capacity and faithfulneſs, whatever opinions they might have different from his own. Herein hath the *Babylon* of the New Teſtament gone beyond that of the Old, in a a decree that *no man ſhall buy or ſell, ſave he that hath the mark, or the name of the beaſt, or the number of his name* (*b*).

The reaſon of *Daniel*'s having this place, ſhews how little bigotry was concerned in his promotion. It was *that the King ſhould have damage in nothing: he was preferred above the Preſidents and Princes, becauſe an excellent ſpirit was found in him, and the King thought to ſet him over the whole realm* (*c*). Nor is it any wonder that *Darius* ſhould be ſo early with his honours

(*a*) Daniel vi. 1, 2.
(*b*) Rev. xiii. 17.
(*c*) Dan. vi. 3.

honours to this great man, if you do but conſider what a long reputation he had poſſeſſed in *Babylon*. He was prepared by as good an education as *Nebuchadnezzar* could give him: *In all matters of wiſdom and underſtanding the King inquired of him*, and his companions, *and found them ten times better than all the magicians and aſtrologers that were in his realm (d)*. When he unfolded that prophetic *dream* about the *golden image*, it is ſaid, *Then the King made him a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors of the wiſe men of Babylon*; and he was placed *in the gate of the King (e)*. There he lived in ſo full credit, that upon another occaſion *Nebuchadnezzar* ſays to him, *I know that the ſpirit of the holy gods is in thee, and no ſecret troubles thee (f)*.

It is certain he had ſome public office in *Belſhazzar*'s time; for you read of a viſion *in the third year of the reign of King* Belſhazzar, and he had it *in Shuſhan the palace (g)*. It is likely ſome employment kept him there; nay it is out of all doubt from what he ſaith at the end of it: *I Daniel fainted and was ſick certain days, and afterwards I roſe up, and did the King's buſineſs (h)*. It is probable he was afterwards out of place, and ſeems determined againſt one by his anſwer to the King; *Let thy gifts be to thyſelf, and thy rewards to another (i)*. *Belſhazzar* ſpeaks to him as one that had been a long while out of his preſence; *Art thou that Daniel which art of the children of the captivity of Judah, whom the King my Father brought out of Jewry? I have heard of thee, that the ſpirit of the gods is in thee, and that light and underſtanding and excellent wiſdom is found in thee (k)*. This looks as if he had been for ſome time laid aſide from honour;

(d) Dan. i. 20.
(e) Dan. ii. 48, 49.
(f) Dan. iv. 9.
(g) Dan. viii. 1, 2.
(h) Dan. viii. 27.
(i) Dan. v. 17.
(k) Dan. v. 13, 14.

but a very ſolemn Providence brought him to read *the hand-writing on the wall*, that confounded the jeſt of *drinking wine in the veſſels of the temple.* That King himſelf, who but a few hours before had all the contempt in the world for the *Jewiſh* Religion, comes with an awe to ſo great and good a man as *Daniel: He is clothed with ſcarlet, they put a chain of gold about his neck*, and *proclamation* is made concerning him, *that he ſhould be third ruler in the kingdom.* Thus does GOD bring men under a neceſſity of advancing the very perſons whom they hate: *This honour have all the ſaints* (*l*). It lets us ſee, that integrity carries its own reputation, and will make its way through all the ſlander of a party. *Belſhazzar* had turned out *Daniel*, and now, at a great feaſt, reſolved to be merry upon his religion; but his laſt work muſt be to reſtore him, for *that night was Belſhazzar the King of the Chaldeans ſlain.* And as *Darius* the *Median took the kingdom*, he knew it could not be put into better hands, and therefore gave him the office I have mentioned.

2. Here is the uneaſineſs of the Preſidents and Princes: *They ſought to find occaſion againſt Daniel concerning the kingdom: but they could find no occaſion or fault, foraſmuch as he was faithful, nor was there any error or fault found in him* (*m*).

This might be from the deſire of getting into his place: *Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous, but who can ſtand before envy?* that is a paſſion never to be conquered, becauſe it grows upon a perſon's doing well. What need have good people to be looking out after a better world! *Solomon conſidered all travel, and every right work, that for this a man is envied of his neighbour; this alſo is vanity and vexation of ſpirit* (*n*). How bitter an imagination does it give us of duty or public zeal, to have it ſo ill received, that

(*l*) Pſalm cxlix. 9.
(*m*) Dan. vi. 4.
(*n*) Eccl. iv. 4.

that a man's uſefulneſs is his guilt, and he ſhall provoke by all the meaſures he takes to oblige? But there is a ſtate, where obedience will ſit eaſier upon ourſelves and thoſe about us: as *Lucifer the ſon of the morning*, and his companions were the firſt examples of envy in Heaven, ſo they are the laſt; no unquiet temper comes there, but ſatisfaction and love circulate among them for ever.

Or it may be theſe Preſidents and Princes had a mind to be more at liberty than *Daniel*'s inſpection would allow. They did not like the integrity of a man whoſe character anſwered this condition, *that the King ſhould have damage in nothing*. The getting him turned out would give them an opportunity of revelling in *diſhoneſt gain*, and upon theſe motives they are in a general deſign againſt him: *Then ſaid theſe men, We ſhall not find any occaſion againſt this Daniel, except we find it againſt him concerning the law of his God* (*o*). He muſt be thrown out upon a religious teſt; which though it was an inſtance of their wickedneſs, yet leaves an honour upon him that was to ſuffer by it. It is an argument thoſe perſons are blameleſs in their office, whom nothing but a new law can turn out of it. Thus it was here, they come to *Darius* with the uſual compliment: *O King, live for ever! All the princes of the kingdom, the governors, the preſidents, the counſellors and the captains, have conſulted together to eſtabliſh a royal ſtatute, and to make a firm decree, That whoſoever ſhall aſk a petition of any god or man for thirty days, ſave of thee O King, he ſhall be caſt into the den of lions. Now, O King, eſtabliſh the decree, and ſign the writing, that it be not changed according to the law of the Medes and Perſians, which alters not* (*p*). The pretence of this was, that it would make for the King's honour, and give him an advantage of endearing himſelf to his new people: thus was loyalty a cloke of wickedneſs.

There

(*o*) Dan. vi. 5. (*p*) Dan. vi. 6, 7, 8.

There ſeems to be two parties in this deſign.

1. They that acted by malice and envy. It was formed in their minds, and covered with all the pretences of duty and zeal to the throne; though how void they were of that, you find by their inſulting the King afterwards, giving him no room for his mercy, but reſolving to huff him with the ſtatute into which they had tricked him: *Know, O King, that the law of the Medes and Perſians is, that no decree or ſtatute which the King eſtabliſheth may be changed* (*q*).

2. There was another party that conſented to this woful device, with more inadvertency than malice, and that was the King himſelf. One would wonder indeed that he ſhould, upon any views whatſoever, come into ſo ill a deſign, or that the common prudence and conſcience of a man ſhould not have kept him out of it; but there is an inchantment goes along with flattery, it is hard to believe it and not to be ſtupified with it: *If a ruler hearken to lies, all his ſervants are wicked* (*r*); when they find his weak ſide, where he is moſt unguarded, they will ply him there.

That the King was drawn into this by a mere error, appears from the honeſt unaffected pain that it gave him: *He was ſore diſpleaſed with himſelf, and ſet his heart on Daniel to deliver him; and he laboured to the going down of the ſun to deliver him* (*s*). Thus does a haſty reſolution make way for a ſlow repentance; but he was *enſnared with the words of his mouth.* And you may obſerve the equity of Providence, that the man who was ſo weak as to make this bargain, is the firſt that feels the miſchief of it.

Now it is out of his power to help the perſon who had ſerved him beſt: he ſees the intrigue when it was too

(*q*) Dan. vi. 15.
(*r*) Proverbs xxix. 12.
(*s*) Dan. vi. 14.

too late; his favourite, his counſellor, and the greateſt friend of the empire, muſt be given up to the lions. What a melancholy time this proved to *Darius*, you read: *He went to his palace, and paſſed the night in faſting; neither were the inſtruments of muſic brought before him, and his ſleep went from him. He aroſe early in the morning, and went to the den of lions; when he came to the den, he cried, with a lamentable voice unto Daniel* (*t*). Thus you ſee this ſtatute was agreed to by perſons of different views; the Princes for their own ends drew in the King to ſacrifice the moſt able and upright counſellor in his dominions.

How long this matter was depending, we cannot tell; the ſcripture hath left us uncertain whether there was any diſtance between preſenting the decree, and having it paſs into a law. If it was a thing done haſtily, *Daniel* might not know of it, till it was too late to prevent it: if he had warning beforehand, and made his application to the King againſt it, yet the caſe is neglected by the man that had ſo much reaſon to value him. However this was, yet we are ſure of that which is more our concern; and that is,

II. His behaviour upon it: *When he knew that the writing was ſigned, he went into his houſe, and his windows being open in his chamber towards Jeruſalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.*

Here are ſome things to be explained before they come to be improved.

1. The place of his worſhip.
2. The manner of it.
3. The frequency.
4. The

(*t*) Dan. vi. 18, 19, 20.

4. The matter it conſiſted of.
5. The cuſtom he obſerved in it.

1. As to the place of his worſhipping GOD, it was in *his own houſe:* they had no other temples in *Babylon*, and were a great way off from that city and fabric where GOD had fixed his name: but neither his bleſſing nor their duty was confined thither; as it was happily obſerved in the conſecration of that temple, that *the heaven of heavens could not contain him, how much leſs this houſe?* He would be a GOD, a friend, a benefactor to his people, when they could not come thither.

And if *Daniel*'s worſhip was accepted in a private family during that age, when the holineſs of places were allowed; the believer need be under no ſuſpence now that all theſe ceremonial doctrines are laid aſide: for *neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jeruſalem, ſhall they worſhip the father* (*u*). It is all one where, provided the work be carried on *in ſpirit and truth: he dwells not in temples made with hands* (*x*).

And then beſides you may obſerve, though *Daniel* lived in a houſe ſuitable to his quality, as being the chief miniſter of ſtate, yet he does not think it too good for a houſe of religion. He had other cares upon him above thoſe of the kingdom: wherever he is an inhabitant, he will be a ſupplicant.

2. The manner of his worſhip is very remarkable, that *his windows were opened in his chamber towards Jeruſalem.* This was not to give his enemies an advantage of ſeeing him; for it is no man's duty to court his own danger: nor was it any new thing, for it is ſaid that *he prayed and gave thanks before his God as he did aforetime.* And leaſt of all can we ſuppoſe, that he did it from any low thoughts of the divine omniſcience or favour, as if a prayer was eaſier to be heard from an open window, or went out under an

(*u*) John iv. 21. | (*x*) Acts xvii. 24.

an advantage by being pointed to ſuch a quarter: no, he knew that he had to deal with a GOD whoſe *preſence fills the heaven and the earth* (*y*), and valued not which way his eyes were turned. Not but that ſome of the *Jews* run headlong into this vanity, as another Prophet of thoſe times acquaints us: *There were five and twenty men between the porch and the altar, that were worſhipping with their faces towards the eaſt* (*z*). But as *Daniel* was above *theſe abominations*, ſo he does not ſo much as fall in with their ceremony: for *Jeruſalem* was almoſt full ſouth from *Babylon*; ſo that his opening the window that way muſt have another meaning, and ſeveral things offer themſelves in anſwer to it.

(1.) It was complying with the original terms of the conſecration: *Solomon* begged, *If thy people be carried away captive far or near, yet if they bethink themſelves, and make ſupplication to thee in the land of them that carried them away captive, and pray towards the land which thou gaveſt to their fathers, the city thou haſt choſen, and the houſe that I have built for thy name; then hear thou their prayer and ſupplication from heaven thy dwelling-place, and maintain their cauſe* (*a*). Nay before this, *David* ſaid, *I will worſhip towards thy holy temple* (*b*).

(2.) It was to ſhew his faith and hope of the peoples return thither; according to that direction of *Jeremiah*, whoſe writings *Daniel* was often peruſing: *Remember the Lord afar off, and let Jeruſalem come into your mind* (*c*). GOD had told them that he would *bring back their captivity*, that *Jeruſalem ſhould be the throne of the Lord* (*d*): though it was for a long time without inhabitant, yet *the remnant ſhould return, even the remnant to the mighty God*. He had called *Cyrus* his *ſhepherd* and *anointed* ſeveral ages before he was born, becauſe in his reign *the foundation of the temple ſhould be*

(*y*) Jer. xxiii. 24.
(*z*) Ezek. viii. 16.
(*a*) 1 Kings viii. 46—49.
(*b*) Pſal. cxxxviii. 2.
(*c*) Jer. li. 50.
(*d*) Jer. iii. 17.

be laid. Perhaps here was a great deal to obſcure the promiſe, no dawn of that felicity now: but yet he takes his daily looks that way, under an aſſurance that the LORD would *perform that good thing to the houſe of Iſrael.*

And as he believed it, ſo by this you ſee how heartily he wiſhed for it; which ſhews us what an amplitude of zeal he had, and how much a care for the public intereſt of Religion ſwallowed up all that was due to himſelf. Why ſhould a perſon in ſo much danger trouble his thoughts about the return of a people? As he had not many hours to live, it ſeems to be a roving meditation that leads him into a concern for others: one would rather imagine he ſhould think of nothing elſe now beſides the *den of lions.* But as *Jeruſalem* was his *chiefeſt joy* in proſperity, ſo it is his deareſt care in a time of trouble. Though he might beg for mercies to himſelf, to be directed through the temptation, or delivered out of it, yet you ſee the opening of his heart, by that of his window, is to *Jeruſalem the city of the great King.*

(3.) There he knew that the MESSIAH was to come: *He of whom Moſes in the law, and the Prophets did write* (*e*). Whether this matter happened before that Prayer of his in the ninth chapter, I cannot tell: but it is plain that they could not be far aſunder; for that was *in the firſt year of Darius* (*f*), and therefore I think it not improbable that the angel *Gabriel* might have appeared to him before this plot of the Princes took effect. And as in his Prayer he makes a very moving inquiry about the *temple that was deſolate*, the city that was burnt, and the people who groaned under a long captivity; ſo the anſwer was, that *Jeruſalem ſhould be built*, and there *the Meſſiah be cut off, but not for himſelf:* ſo that he opened his window that way, *in hope of the promiſe made of God unto their fathers. Iſaiah had ſeen his glory, and ſpake of him,*

(*e*) John i. 45. (*f*) Dan. ix. 1.

him, that he ſhould ſit on a throne high and lifted up, and his train ſhould fill the temple (*g*). And if you take this ſenſe of the words, it lets you ſee that good people in thoſe ages came to GOD by a Mediator; their Religion was a *looking to Jeſus*, though the *light* did not *ſhine* out, as it does in our more *perfect day*.

3. The frequency of his worſhip: *He kneeled upon his knees three times a day.* The Scripture hath hinted at this circumſtance with a great deal of variety: *It is good to ſhew forth his loving-kindneſs in the morning, and his faithfulneſs every night* (*h*). *David* reſolves in one place, that *evening, morn, and noon will I pray and cry aloud, and thou ſhalt hear my voice* (*i*): in another place, *Seven times a day will I praiſe thee becauſe of thy righteous judgments* (*k*): and here *Daniel* does it *three times a day*. This ſhews him to be a man like *Enoch* who *walked with God*, his general life was under that regulation. There is a being *in the fear of the Lord all the day long*; and from the temper we ſhould have for this duty, we are bid to *pray always*, and to *pray without ceaſing*. *Daniel* had found the good of this method before; it was by his own prayer, and the concurrence of his partners, that he obtained the revelation of *the King's ſecret*. Upon any ſolemn turn of affairs, he was fervent in this duty: *when he underſtood by books the number of the years in which God would accompliſh the deſolations of Jeruſalem*, he cloſes the calculation with a cry to heaven, *I have ſet my face to ſeek it with faſting and ſupplication, and weeping and aſhes* (*l*). But beſides what he did upon theſe extraordinary caſes, you find it was his uſual buſineſs to *kneel three times a day*.

4. The matter of his worſhip, the parts that it conſiſted of: *He prayed, and gave thanks.* Here was work enough for prayer, to be *delivered from the ungodly*, and have

(*g*) Iſai. vi. 2.
(*h*) Pſal. xcii. 2.
(*i*) Pſal. lv. 17.
(*k*) Pſal. cxix. 164.
(*l*) Dan. ix. 1, 2.

have his ſoul brought out of all adverſity: that petition would have ſuited his caſe, *Keep me from the ſnare they have laid for me, and from the gins of the workers of iniquity: Let the wicked fall into their own nets, whilſt that I withal eſcape* (*m*). But one would think that there could be no praiſes, no *giving of thanks* expected from a man on the brink of the lion's den. But,

As no trouble can make the believer miſerable, ſo none ſhould make him ſilent: he hath mercies to own of a greater ſort than can be taken from him here. The loſing of honour, intereſt, and life itſelf, draws no ill conſequence along with it upon holineſs, joy, and *the inheritance reſerved in heaven for us:* we may go through the fire, ſhouting in the proſpect of what comes after it. When perſecution hath taken away all we can loſe, there is ſtill a reſerve that will oblige us to eternal praiſes.

5. The cuſtom he obſerved. It was what he did aforetime; not an unuſual heat that this new danger had put him into: this was his way when he *ſat in the gate of the King*. He came down from the dignity of a preſident to the humility of a petitioner. Greatneſs does not run away with his thoughts and time: though he had the accounts of an hundred and twenty Princes to ſettle, yet he vows to have leiſure enough for his God: thus *happy is the man that fears always*.

From all which I may give you this note, as the ſenſe of the whole ſtory.

Doctr. That no proſpect of loſs or danger ought to hinder a good man in the courſe of duty that he owes to God. Nothing could be more perplexing than the caſe before us; and therefore the perſon that can find his way out of Religion, may have that reproach left upon him that is given to the Prince of *Tyrus*; *Behold! thou art wiſer than Daniel* (*n*).

Here I muſt take a method that is a little unuſual.

1. Give

(*m*) Pſal. cxli. 9, 10. (*n*) Ezek. xxviii. 3.

1. Give you ſome particulars as the foundation of this truth.

2. Conſider the further light we may have into it from this ſtory.

1. I might argue the Chriſtian's obligation to *hold on the profeſſion of his faith* in the face of all danger, from more heads than either the time will allow, or the caſe does need; but you may take theſe three.

1ſt, This ſhews that your religion is founded on no other authority than a divine one: it is not often that the Church of CHRIST hath been eſtabliſhed by law; for as it never needs a law to make it better, ſo it ſeldom hath one to make it ſafer. Your duty is nothing elſe but a homage paid to him that hath made you, and *bought you with a price*; and his bare word is enough to claim it. Sometimes he will have this principle ſet out in a good light, when his people ſhew they underſtand an obligation that no commands of men can diſſolve. His Providence hath wiſely ordered it in moſt ages, that there ſhall be a claſhing between the laws of GOD and Man. Theſe are times that put the brighteſt honour upon religion, and prove how it is founded upon a will that is purely divine; but if you ſuffer it to be changed upon any new face of danger, it is plain you mean ſome other authority, and *ſtay yourſelves upon him that ſmote you, rather than on the Lord, the Holy One of Iſrael (o).*

2*dly*, This alſo gives a teſtimony to the pleaſure and benefit there is in ſerving GOD. When it is attended with the grandeur and profits of this world, Satan can play his accuſation againſt thoſe that profeſs it: *Does Job ſerve God for nought? Haſt thou not made a hedge about him, ſo that his ſubſtance is increaſed in the land?*

Conſtantine did the Church of CHRIST more harm than ever *Diocleſian* did, though he did not deſign it; for by the loads of revenue and titles he gave to

(o) Iſa. x. 20.

the fawning biſhops, he ſucked out the love they had to one another under perſecution; it was eaſier for them to agree in a priſon than in a palace. But

A man that runs the hazard of loſing what is dear to him, rather than he will take any undue liberties with his conſcience, is a living record to the world, *That truly God is good to Iſrael, to every upright-hearted one (p).* Here is employment, honour, and the greateſt article of intereſt gone; but it is for the ſake of that which makes it richly worth my while to part with it. If I cannot have the bleſſings of both worlds, I will make ſure of the better; and in all the miſeries of a deſert, *My ſoul ſhall be ſatisfied as with marrow and fatneſs (q).*

3dly, Theſe troubles do but call you to uſe your ſatisfaction in the Divine Providence. Do you believe that GOD governs the world? Though it is what any one will readily grant, yet an infidelity upon this head is the moſt common of any. The Pſalmiſt found it ſo hard to poiſe himſelf with this truth, *that his ſteps were well nigh ſlipt, and his feet almoſt gone.* Are you ſatisfied that CHRIST is *Head over all things to his Church*, that nothing happens but by his permiſſion, and nothing but to your advantage? Muſt there not be ſome uſe of your Faith in his Providence, as well as in his promiſe? You depend upon him for another world, and ſo you muſt for a good journey through this: *This is our God for ever and ever, and he ſhall be our guide until death (r).*

Here is now a conteſt between my duty and intereſt; the former is plain to me, the latter's under a cloud. Let me then take the ſurer ſide; I may better truſt Providence in a way of duty than out of it: withdrawing myſelf from the obedience I owe to him, is caſting him off. And what? Shall I depend upon his goodneſs

(p) Pſalm lxxiii. 1.
(q) Pſalm lxiii. 5.
(r) Pſalm xviii. *ult.*

goodneſs to feed me, when I deny his authority to rule me? And let me tell you, that

As God is never at a loſs to ſupply the wants of his people, ſo every mercy that comes after ſuch a reſignation hath a double ſweetneſs in it. He can revive my honour, and *ſatisfy me with bread*, though duty to him throws me out of the way of both. What method he will take to do it, I cannot tell; but how much beauty and joy will there be in the thing itſelf? Therefore *truſt in the Lord, and do good, ſo ſhalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou ſhalt be fed* (*s*).

2. As an application to what you have heard, I will conſider the caſe of this ſtory under two heads.

(1.) Lay before you ſome plauſible objections that might have been raiſed againſt *Daniel*'s doing thus.

(2.) Tell the conſequences of his integrity.

(1.) No doubt of it but ſeveral, who had a value for the man, would perſuade him to keep out of the reach of this law. As,

1. They might argue, that it was a great deal to loſe life, and eſpecially in ſo diſhonourable a way: that though it is true, what he did was plain duty, yet in a caſe ſo extreme God would be gracious; for he that *loves mercy rather than ſacrifice*, hath allowed his people to have mercy on themſelves, rather than give up their lives for a ſacrifice to others. Had it only been diſgrace, or ſome lower damage, then they would not have adviſed him; but certainly life is a more ſolemn poſſeſſion than to be ſo eaſily parted with.

This could not ſhake his integrity, he was far from deſpiſing life, but he knew of a *loving-kindneſs* that was tranſcendent to it; and if he could not have it conſiſtent with the honour of the God that gave it, it is better loſt than kept. Or,

2. It might be objected, that this would have been a loſs to the public. Here is a king well inclined to

(*s*) Pſalm xxxvii. 3.

the *Jews*, and his moderation drew the hatred of an hundred and twenty Princes upon him. The government is ſcarce well ſettled, *Daniel* ſeems to be the chief ſecurity that it can have; and if he will not be perſuaded to keep his life, all muſt fall into confuſion. But,

He knew that God is never in that diſtreſs for his own cauſe, as to oblige any man to take one wrong ſtep in order to promote it. It is no maxim in the politics that he gives us, to *do evil that good may come of it* (*t*). It is enough that when his Providence opens a door of being uſeful, his grace makes us ſo; but when that opportunity is gone, he hath deſigned us for his honour ſome other way. *Daniel* was as much an ornament to his religion in the den of lions, as he had been in the palace; and brought more glory to God by loſing his place, than ever he could have done by keeping it.

3. They might urge, that this was only a decree for thirty days; and therefore it was but excuſing himſelf from his duty ſo long, and he might return to it again without any danger; and certainly it was worth his while to baffle the project of a tricking party. But,

He that knew not what might *be brought forth in a day*, hath no mind to run any hazard for a month. What if God had cut him off before the end of that time? though he might die ſafely, yet a good man deſires to be *found ſo doing*, in the actual courſe of his duty. And beſides,

If this project did not take, after the thirty days, they would concert another; for their buſineſs was not to honour the King, but to exclude *Daniel*: therefore he makes a ſtand at firſt, to ſhew they have nothing to do with his conſcience. And ſuch an example we have from the Apoſtle to the *falſe brethren, who came in privily to ſpy out the liberty they had in Chriſt*;

(*t*) Romans iii. 8.

Chriſt; to whom they gave place by ſubjection no not for an hour, that the truth of the Goſpel might continue with them (*u*).

4. They might urge that there was no expreſs command for his praying ſo many times a day; and therefore it might be lawful to make ſome omiſſions: that a neglect of worſhip is not ſo bad as running into ſin. This is not a caſe ſo dangerous as the decree of *Nebuchadnezzar*, that obliged them to *fall down before the golden image that he had ſet up*. Here was only a waving what the extremity of the danger would not allow. But,

He acts up to this principle, that no human authority can make any limitations to his duty; and if he would not loſe one ſeaſon of Prayer to ſave his life, it is a reproach to thoſe who let every little trifle come in the way of that duty, and do not *continue therein with perſeverance*.

5. If he would do it, they might adviſe him to uſe all the ſecrecy that was poſſible. There was other houſes more proper than his own, where the enemies could not find him, and thus he might preſerve his conſcience and intereſt too. But,

He knew how much honour it would bring to God, to make religion a condition of life; that he will not have the one without the other: therefore he goes where he uſed to do, into the place where he knew his enemies would ſeek him.

Thus you ſee what *Daniel* had to conquer before he went to the lions, and that no perſuaſion of this kind could touch him: he receives the ſentence with more temper than the King could give it. And that leads me to,

(2.) The conſequence of this matter, which I will only mention in four particulars.

1. His miraculous preſervation: *God ſent his Angel, and cloſed the mouths of the lions*, as he himſelf tells

(*u*) Gal. ii. 4, 5.

the King. The brutes in the den were eaſier to him than thoſe in the court: there goes more to the turning of a politician than the muzzling of a lion. What a teſtimony did GOD then *give to the Word of his Grace?*

Here I expect it will be replied, *Daniel* was an extraordinary man, one that had the ſpirit of prophecy; and it is no wonder if a perſon who foreſaw his deliverance ſhould venture into danger: but I think it is very plain he had no aſſurance of his eſcape. The three men that talked to *Nebuchadnezzar*, ſeemed to be under the direction of ſome hope; *Our God whom we ſerve is able to deliver us, yea and he will ſave us out of thy hands, O King* (*x*)*!* but we find nothing of that in this other caſe; unleſs you ſuppoſe *Darius* himſelf to be the Prophet, when he took his leave of him, *Thy God whom thou ſerveſt continually, he will deliver thee* (*y*).

If you ſay that miracles are ceaſed, theſe things are not to be expected now; I do not ſee any foundation in Scripture for that opinion: we ought not to *limit the Holy One of Iſrael.* And as he did this by the care of an Angel, theſe continue *miniſtring ſpirits to the heirs of ſalvation*, and are readier at their office ſince CHRIST is got to a place above them: for *when he brought again the firſt-begotten into the world, he ſaid, Let all the Angels of God worſhip him.* Nor is this matter ſo much out of the way as we may imagine: we are directed to live by faith, as the good people in all ages have done; and though it is not likely that our names will be ſo famous as theirs, yet the principle is the ſame. It was *by faith that the elders obtained a good report*; and one of the exploits that is recorded of it is, that faith hath *ſtopped the mouths of lions.*

2. The

(*x*) Dan. iii. 17.
(*y*) Dan. vi. 16.
(*z*) Hebrews xi. 2.

2. The puniſhment of his enemies. The lions who were under a reſtraint to *Daniel*, are at liberty when his accuſers were tumbled down; for *they brake their bones before they could reach the bottom of the pit*. Here ſeems to be the cry of common juſtice againſt thoſe men. Though very often when a bad law is repealed, the procurers of it may eſcape; yet *Darius* would have his vindication in the hearts of the whole land, when he emptied ſuch a court into ſuch a den: every mouth admired the ſentence. Thus did GOD *plead the cauſe of his ſervants reproach: The Lord is known by the judgments that he executes, when the wicked is ſnared with the work of his own hands.*

3. His own advancement: he is reſtored to his dignity again. So that you ſee the believer ſerves a good maſter: loſing any thing for him is but putting it out to uſury; we receive in *this world an hundred fold, and in the world to come life everlaſting*. And how different is the figure that *Daniel* made upon his Reſtoration, from what it would have been had he evaded the law? It might then have been ſaid of him, here is a man that makes a noiſe about his religion, but we now know the rate of his conſcience, the price that he will ſell it at; he is more ſteady to his place than any thing elſe: this is an inſinuation that the world will come into; it is but talking as Satan himſelf did againſt *Job*, *Put forth thy hand and touch his bone and fleſh, and he will curſe thee to thy face.* But,

Daniel hath it without any reproach of that kind: every one ſees him fit to be *ſet over the whole realm*, and owns him the man whom *the King* of heaven and earth *delighteth to honour:* nor would there be any objection againſt what he ſaith of himſelf, *My God hath ſent his Angel to ſhut the mouth of the lions that they might not hurt me, becauſe before him innocency was found in me, and alſo before thee, O King! have I done no hurt.*

4. It ended in the greater advancement of religion: Darius *wrote to all people, nations, and languages, and made a decree, That in every dominion of his kingdom, men ſhould tremble and fear before the God of Daniel; for he is the living God, and ſtedfaſt for ever, and his kingdom that which ſhall not be deſtroyed, and his dominion ſhall be even unto the end: he delivers and reſcues, he works ſigns and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions* (z). And doubtleſs this was dearer to the good man than any other benefits of his eſcape.

Such an integrity ſtrikes the world with an awe, to ſee that you are guided by a principle that they took for nothing elſe but fancy. The great diſpute is between earth and heaven, which is better and more deſerving of our affections. Now, at ſuch a time, the believer hath the caſting of the ſcales left with him; and plainly ſhews that the cauſe of GOD is never the worſe for any ſhame and danger that goes along with it. And thus, *The trial of his faith, which was more precious than that of gold that periſheth, will be found to praiſe and glory at the coming of Jeſus Chriſt.*

(z) Dan. vi. 26, 27.

SERMON

SERMON XIII.

The ASS; or, The SERPENT.

A Compariſon between the Tribes of *Iſſachar* and *Dan*, in their regard for CIVIL LIBERTY.

Preached NOVEMBER 5, 1712.

GEN. XLIX. 14—18.

Iſſachar is a ſtrong aſs couching down between two burdens. And he ſaw that reſt was good, and the land that it was pleaſant; and bowed his ſhoulder to bear, and became a ſervant unto tribute. Dan ſhall judge his people, as one of the tribes of Iſrael. Dan ſhall be a ſerpent by the way, an adder in the path; that biteth the horſe-heels, ſo that his rider ſhall fall backward. I have waited for thy ſalvation, O Lord.

THESE words are part of the prophecy that *Jacob* dealt among his ſons when *the days drew near that he muſt die* (*a*); and they let us ſee with what variety of temper thoſe people acted, who all grew from the ſame father: a full argument how well the diſtinction is formed, that *all are not Iſrael, who are of Iſrael: Neither*

(*a*) Gen. xlvii. 29.

Neither becauſe they are the ſeed of Abraham, are they all children (*b*): he here opens out *what ſhall befal them in the latter days* (*c*), and how they would carry it when they came into the promiſed land; and becauſe ſome of them ſhould have little or no taſte of liberty, and others would purſue it through all the expence and danger that lay in their way, he places theſe two together, that every one who reads may do juſtice upon the plain oppoſition there is between them.

I ſhall conſider the words, firſt, as they deſcribe a people that are ſluggiſh and cowardly, who will venture nothing to ſave all, whoſe ſouls are beneath knowing the diſtinction of bondage and freedom: and on the other hand, as they give us the character of thoſe who admire their liberties, and will dare to ſeek and fetch them where-ever they are carried; who reckon this a property that ſhould not be loſt as long as it can be kept, and will ſcarce ſubmit to an exiſtence under tyranny.

In theſe two branches you have the diviſion of the text; here is a tribe of *Iſrael* that gives us an example of each temper: *Iſſachar* is remembred for his neglect of that which *Dan* was reſolved upon no terms to part with: and by obſerving what good old *Jacob* ſaith of theſe two that were ſo unlike one another, we may fix the characters that are due to thoſe who either deſpiſe or value the deliverance of *this day*.

I. I ſhall begin with the account that you have of *Iſſachar*, whoſe paſſive obedience, if you will call it ſo, is condemned to memory by theſe words; *Iſſachar is a ſtrong aſs couching down between two burdens: And he ſaw that reſt was good, and the land that it was pleaſant, and bowed his ſhoulder to bear, and became a ſervant to tribute:* where you have three things:

1. The

(*b*) Rom. ix. 6, 7. (*c*) Gen. xlix. 1.

1. The general temper of this people.
2. The ſubjection and bondage they fell into. And,
3. The reaſon they gave for this ſtupidity.

(1.) You may obſerve, that many of the tribes have their hiſtory couched in a reſemblance that is given of them: they are compared to ſome creature of that very diſpoſition that ſhould obtain among them: thus *Judah is a lion's whelp*; *Naphtali a hind let looſe*; *Joſeph a fruitful bough*; *and Benjamin a ravening wolf* (*d*). Now theſe alluſions would convey to us ſuch thoughts of the people as bear up to the account we have of them afterwards: they are moſt of them to be underſtood as a reputation; but what is ſaid of *Iſſachar*, is as full of contempt as a metaphor can be: we are to know him by his likeneſs to the moſt heavy and ſtupid animal in the creation. Inſtead of having his name from ſomething vigorous and beautiful, his father leaves this upon him, that he is *a ſtrong aſs couching down between two burdens*. The ground of the ſimilitude you ſee is the little reliſh they ſhould have for their liberties, the ſorry and dull ſurrender they would make of themſelves to tyranny; which is a temper expoſed in this compariſon two ways:

1. It is imputed to nothing elſe but the ſtupidity of them that ſubmit to it; the tribe that ſinks into thoſe meaſures is reſembled by an *aſs*.

2. It is condemned by the inſinuation that it was in their power to have it otherways; *Iſſachar is a ſtrong aſs:* that very ſtrength that makes him couch under a load, would be ſufficient to throw it off.

1. What the compariſon leads me firſt to tell you is, that the foundation of all paſſive obedience is laid in ſtupidity. They that *couch down between two burdens, who bow their ſhoulders to bear, and become ſervants*

(*d*) Gen. xlix. 9, 21, 22, 27.

vants to tribute, may here ſee what herd they belong to.

Though an aſs was more uſed in thoſe eaſtern countries than it is with us, yet the Old Teſtament hath accounted of it as ſo mean a creature, that the compariſon is very juſt: it ſeems to be made for no higher a deſign than drudgery, bearing of burdens, no way remarkable either for its head or its heels, ſo little capable of being taught, that the folly of our nature is ſignified by it, that man is *born as a wild aſs's colt:* and though it is true in thoſe parts we find the greateſt men riding on them, yet it is a creature that the ceremonial law hath branded in a very peculiar way: it muſt upon no terms whatſoever be thrown among the offerings of the LORD: the command was very general, *Thou ſhalt ſet apart unto the Lord all that opens the matrix, and every firſtling that comes of the beaſt which thou haſt, the males ſhall be the Lord's* (*e*). This law was laid out in that compaſs, to put them often in mind of the MESSIAH, who ſhould be *the firſt-born of every creature*; yet to this there is one exception, and the only animal left out is, *every firſtling of an aſs thou ſhalt redeem with a lamb; and if thou wilt not redeem it, thou ſhalt break its neck.*

So that when *Jacob* ſpeaks of *Iſſachar* under this compariſon, it is a viler name than he could poſſibly leave him by another; and it may intimate to us, not only the ſtupidity of their nature that run into this crime, but a particular unfitneſs for the ſervice of GOD. They ſeem to be the outcaſt of both worlds; they give up all that is dear to them in this, and ſhew a dulneſs that can have no room in the other. The way of ſerving GOD is *without fear, being delivered from the wrath of enemies, in holineſs and righteouſneſs all our days* (*f*). *The fearful and unbelieving* are in the front of thoſe ſinners who fill *the lake of fire and brimſtone.*

(*e*) Exod. xiii. 12, 13. | (*f*) Luke i. 74, 75.

stone (*g*). You may always observe it, that an indifference to civil liberties goes along with a neglect of that which is religious: a man that throws away the blessings of Providence, cannot have a due relish to those of Grace.

Though submitting to the impious will of a Monarch hath been exalted as if it was *the one thing needful*, yet it is easy to prove, both by the rule of Scripture, and the histories of men, this is so far from containing the whole of Religion, that it really possesseth no one part of it: there can be no *Faith* in it, for that would both *purify the heart* and *conquer the world*. It was this that made *Moses forsake Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the King* (*h*). And there can be no *love*, I mean to God or his people, for that would teach us to value what the one gives and the other enjoys: and though this may be called *patience*, yet it is a prostitution of the name to a temper which hath none of the thing; for this grace shews itself in bearing a burden, not in laying it on. The over-ruling hand of God we must submit to, but this will consist with all the zeal we can use against the tools he employs. The distinction is a good one, and as old as *David*, who knew how different his behaviour ought to be: *If the Lord hath stirred thee up against me*, saith he to *Saul*, *let him accept an offering*, I have deserved it from him, and cannot answer him one of a thousand; *but if they be the children of men, cursed be they before the Lord* (*i*).

It is plain that people lose their Christianity with their liberties; and when once an incroaching power hath made them slaves, there needs little more to make them Heathens. The Ministers that preach up this doctrine, will soon understand no other: it shall drive faith, repentance and holiness out of the Pulpit, and Churches, and instead of feeding the children *with bread*, they will give them *a stone*: in a little while we shall hear nothing

(*g*) Rev. xxi. 8.
(*h*) Heb. xi. 27.
(*i*) 1 Sam. xxvi. 19.

nothing else but obedience to the lust of men, as if CHRIST had no other errand in laying down his life, than to make the Kings of the earth a compliment of ours; that as he was a *servant of Rulers*, we must be so too; as if no sin could be dangerous but what they call rebellion, and the terms of *procuring to ourselves damnation* were never to be used but in one case, which is resisting of a civil power. We shall seldom hear a better application of that awful argument; it is not so warmly pleaded to make us *flee from the wrath to come*, that *being warned of God concerning things not seen as yet, we may be moved with fear:* they will but seldom trouble their heads about the danger of debauchery, that *whoremongers and adulterers God will judge:* they will tell us but little of the hazard such are in, who are *lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God*, who blaspheme the whole scheme of Religion, and use that book to make them laugh, which makes *the Devils tremble*; who rush into the retirements of our worship, the ordinances that ought to be kept clean and holy; I say, we hear little of their danger, tho' the Scripture hath given us the same dreadful word in that case which agrees so well with them in the other: *They that eat and drink unworthily, eat and drink to themselves damnation* (*k*). These are the incroachments that slavery will make upon our Religion.

But we *have not so learned Christ.* The Apostles that went about with the Gospel, were often claiming the privileges of the law. For this did *Paul* argue with the *Centurion* on the stairs of the castle, and would not let the Christian run away with the Roman: for this did he threaten to shake the government of *Philippi*, and refuse to take his liberty at that easy rate of going out of the prison; no, he was resolved to let those Magistrates know, that as the laws of the empire had given him a protection, so he would never

(*k*) 1 Cor. xi. 29.

ver loſe it for want of zeal; and though the jailor, who was but converted the night before, brought him the meſſage, *they have ſent to let you go, now then depart in peace*; yet he uſeth the advantage that innocence gave him over tyranny, *they have beaten us openly, and uncondemned, being Romans, and have caſt us into priſon, and now do they thruſt us out privily, nay verily but let them come themſelves and fetch us out* (*l*). So tender was he of his privileges, that though he knew as much as any man how to deſpiſe the pomp of the world, yet in this caſe he will inſiſt upon a ceremony that perhaps was never demanded before; that the Magiſtrates of the town ſhould come to the priſon door and beg pardon, and bring them out, whom through a miſtake they had put in, and deſire them to *depart from their city*. For this did he refuſe to anſwer the ſummons of *Feſtus*, who would have betrayed him to his enemies, but *appealed to Ceſar*; and from this principle did he deal ſo roundly with *Ananias*, *God ſhall ſmite thee, thou whited wall: for ſitteſt thou there to judge me according to the law, and commandeſt me to be ſmitten contrary to the law* (*m*)?

This is the ſpirit of our Religion, it allows none of the ſtupidity that *Iſſachar* was run down into; for an *aſs* can no more be a *pattern* under the Goſpel, than it could be a *ſacrifice* under the law. But it is enough we are told what ſort of creatures they are, by the metaphor in my text; deſpicable to men, and rejected by GOD; made for ſervice and contempt. The compariſon gives us the loweſt opinion of thoſe to whom it belongs. They are by this repreſented as a ſtupid ſervile people, for the word fits their heads as well as their ſhoulders.

2. The crime of their *becoming ſervants to tribute*, is hinted at by the farther account we have of them, that they lay under no neceſſity of doing it: they had it in their power to be otherwiſe, and might have compelled

(*l*) Acts xvi. 36, 37. | (*m*) Acts xxiii. 3.

compelled a better lot for themselves and their posterity. Had they been drained and weakned, and sunk down to an inability, that which was now both their sin and punishment, had been only the latter. But *Issachar* was *a strong ass*, able to refuse a load as well as to bear it.

Several annotators give us this note from the *Hebrew* word, that he was *an ass of bone*; which perhaps is a farther contempt of him, to tell us his want of spirit, as if he was only outside, a mere shell and frame of nature: and indeed they who so tamely give up all that can be dear, shew but little soul in that surrender. But I shall take the words in the first sense I gave you of them, that he is called *a strong ass*; to signify, that he had capacity to have done otherwise, only he wanted heart and courage to use it. He that *couched down between two burdens*, might easily have protested against one; he that *bowed his shoulder to bear*, could have clothed it with armour: and the wealth with which he paid his *tribute* as a *servant*, might have led him into the field as a rival.

All the instances that we have in Scripture of submission to an unrighteous power, represent the people as not able to do otherwise. We never once find a good man neglecting to resist an injustice when he could do it. *Moses* indeed fled from *Pharaoh*, because he had no prospect of conquering him; but when he had to do only with a single *Egyptian*, who was *smiting one of his brethren*, he is no longer about it than whilst *he looks this way and that way*, and then he *kills him, and hideth him in the sand* (*n*): and this is so far from having the censure that a slave would give it, that upon that action he was in hopes to have raised his public character, and by this justice upon the officer, thought to have led on that of the people upon the King, as the martyr *Stephen* tells us; for he brings in this as the reason why, *seeing one of the Jews suffer*

(*n*) Exod. ii. 11, 12.

suffer wrong, he avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian, because *he supposed his brethren would have understood, how that by his hand God would have delivered them, but they understood not* (*o*). If their zeal would have come on as fast as his would have led it, they would have been saved then; but they lost forty years by their unbelief. *David* run away from *Saul*, when he had no friend to stand by him, but he put himself at the head of a little army as soon as he could; and the only reason why he did not give him battle was, because he had not force enough: but when those great numbers *came to him every day*, he makes no scruple to go out into the field, for there fell some of *Manasseh* to *David when he came with the Philistines against Saul to battle* (*p*).

A just and holy God may indeed deliver us over to the will of evil men, but to say that he would have us deliver up ourselves, is to blaspheme his empire; for *he hath no fellowship with the thrones of iniquity, who frame mischief by a law* (*q*). That which held Zion in captivity, was God's making *her strength to fail; he had delivered her into their hands against whom she was not able to rise up* (*r*): but when she had more strength, there is a new exhortation to use it; *Shake thyself from the dust, O Jerusalem; loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O thou captive daughter of Zion* (*s*).

In these two things you have the woful temper of this people; they were stupid, and not to be impress by a generous argument; and though it is true, they had strength and capacity, yet it was all thrown away upon a lazy nature that would not use it. *Issachar is a strong ass couching down between two burdens.*

(2.) We have the folly of their behaviour, and are told, how soon they parted with their liberties. And

(*o*) Acts vii. 24, 25.
(*p*) 1 Chron. xii. 19.
(*q*) Psal. xciv. 20.
(*r*) Lam. i. 14.
(*s*) Isai. lii. 2.

here you meet with bondage in every form and shape. Here is oppression in all its weight, *he* falls *between two burdens.* Here is a slavery to his person, *his shoulder is brought to bear* what they lay upon him. Here is poverty in his concerns, *he becomes a servant to tribute*; and here is a necessity for him to be active in all this. Oppression stupifies the faculties, *he coucheth down beneath his burdens*, he *bows his shoulder*, he consents to be a *servant:* What *a gulph of perdition* was this people sunk into? Whither will tyranny lead those who have the heart to follow it? Can we ever begin to stop too soon, when it will be so dreadful to have it too late?

1. You observe here what weight this oppression was laid on with: it was not what *Rehoboam* threatned, *the heaviness of a little finger*; but *he couches down between two burdens.*

Some translate this between two hills; and understand it of the situation that *Issachar* had in the land of *Canaan:* others suppose that it refers to the quarrels they might have with those two tribes that lay on each side of them; but the words seem to tell us what a load of misery they had brought themselves under.

Tyrants, who know no justice, will allow no mercy: they never think their grandeur advanced high enough; they will set no bounds to the lust of empire, but let it rove in all the license of their own fancy. Do not imagine that there is any dealing with an arbitrary government. Laws are only shackles upon you, but no rule to them. *Some remove land marks, they violently take away flocks and feed thereon, they turn the needy out of the way, the poor of the earth hide themselves together: Behold as the wild asses of the desert they go forth to work, rising betimes for a prey*, and it is the tame asses of the villages that fall into their hands: they cause *the naked to go without clothing, he hath no covering in the cold*; *they pluck the fatherless from the breast, and take a pledge of the poor*; *they take away the sheaf from the hungry:*

Men

Men groan out of the city, and the ſoul of the wounded cries out (*t*).

If you would not *couch down between two burdens*, you muſt enter an effectual proteſt againſt one: for they that ſubmit will, in a little time, be brought to that paſs; *Her carriages were heavy loaden, they are a burden to the weary beaſt, they ſtoop, they bow down together, they could not deliver their burden, but themſelves are gone into captivity* (*u*). Thus did the *Ammonites* with the men of *Jabeſh Gilead*; though the poor people would have ſubmitted themſelves unto them, yet they will allow of no eaſier terms than *thruſting out the right eye, and laying it as a reproach upon all Iſrael* (*x*). So unlimited did *Ben-hadad* make himſelf, in the court of a man, who had gone too far, in ſaying, *My Lord, O King, I am thine, and all that I have:* he does not only claim *his ſilver and gold*, but *his wives and children*; and would *ſend his ſervants the next day to take out what was pleaſant in their eyes.*

This made *David* rather chooſe to *fall into the hands of God, than into thoſe of man:* not but that the former could have deſtroyed him with more expedition than the latter; but *with the Lord there was mercy*, with men there is none. And indeed the proceſs hath been very ſhort; when once a tyrant hath ſaid your laws were his, he hath ſoon come to affirm your lives were ſo too. And therefore it is the ſame thing, being his vaſſals, and being his cattle. All that you have *pertaining to life and godlineſs*, is thrown in as a morſel to *Ceſar: They take up all of them with the angle, they catch them with their net, and gather them in their drag, therefore they rejoice and are glad; they will empty continually, and not ſpare to ſlay the nations* (*y*). And how unhappy muſt the caſe of a people be, who never know when they have done ſuffering? Such a

(*t*) Job. xxiv. 2, 3. &c.
(*u*) Iſai. xlvi. 1, 2.
(*x*) 1 Sam. xi. 2.
(*y*) Hab. i. 17.

government upon earth reſembles one of the worſt ideas that we have of hell; where there is *no ſacrifice for ſin, but a certain fearful looking for of more judgment and* new *indignation.*

2. Their perſons were made vile and contemptible, *they bow their ſhoulders to bear.* There are ſome uſages which GOD always reckoned an indignity to human nature. It is for this reaſon that he limited the number of ſtripes that were to be given to a malefactor, *leſt thy brother ſeem vile to thee:* And the ſtatute of murder is laid out upon this ground, that *in the image of God made he man.* Such an oppreſſion did the *Jews* live under in *Egypt*; their burdens were very grievous in the *brick-kilns*, the taſk-maſters obliged them to their whole quantity of work though they denied them *ſtraw*, and then puniſhed them for not doing what they knew to be impoſſible.

When this comes to be the lot of ſuch as give up their liberties, the juſtice of GOD calls for our adoration; they that have *lived in pleaſure* and vanity, are moſt likely to make a ſale of all that they have; they have *eaten the bread of idleneſs*, and how righteous is it with heaven to give them that of ſorrow? that they who are *brought up in ſcarlet, ſhould embrace dunghils?* This is one conſequence of ſlavery; and it fell heavily upon the Prieſts at *Jeruſalem*, who might remember their ſin in their puniſhment: they that uſed to lead the blind, came to *wander as blind men in the ſtreets*, and ſo *polluted with blood, that men could not touch their garments: the anger of the Lord divided them, and he would no more regard them* (z). An abſolute government ſwallows as faſt as you can give, and what will this come to in time? *But the hanging up of Princes by the hand, not honouring the faces of the elders, taking the young men to grind, and making the children fall under the wood* (a).

3. If

(z) Lam. iv. 14. (a) Lam. v. 12, 13.

3. It runs out into poverty. This *paying of tribute*, muſt be underſtood of exceſſive taxes; impoſitions that are enough to drain a country: not what a people conſent to for their own defence, but what are extorted from them. And then what ſignifies the goodneſs of the land, when the profits are offered up as a ſacrifice to the luxury of a ſtranger? Thus hath *a fruitful land been brought into barrenneſs. The houſes* of the people were *made a dunghil*; and they that have lived in the midſt of plenty, *ſought their bread to relieve their ſouls.* They conſent to the loweſt terms merely to enjoy what nature had made their own: *We have given the hand to the Aſſyrian to be ſatisfied with bread*; and, *better are they that periſh by the ſword, than ſuch as are ſtricken through for want of the fruits of the field* (*b*): it was a dreadful article in their judgment, *thine enemy ſhall diſtreſs thee in all thy gates* (*c*).

4. That which makes the caſe deplorable to the laſt degree is, that the people themſelves concur in it, either through a neceſſity, or the habit of bondage. *They bow their own ſhoulder to bear*; and, by an unaccountable mixture of choice and force, *become ſervants to tribute.* When a nation hath given up their liberties, they do not only loſe the thing, but all the taſte they uſed to have of it.

And this may be conſidered both as a growing vice, and a ſtupidity that the righteous GOD hath ſealed them up under. The miſery of ſuch a caſe hath this in it, that the people are never likely to *remember from whence they are fallen, or do their firſt works*; *they ſleep a perpetual ſleep, and do not awake.* It is not a damage that ſets them a thinking, or warms a powerful zeal to recover what they have loſt; but by a long courſe of ſubjection it becomes their own act.

(*b*) Lam. v. 6. (*c*) Deut. xxviii. 55.

(3.) I will inquire into the reaſons they give for this neglect of themſelves, or what it is they get in exchange for their liberties; and you find there are two things that leave them under the power of this infatuation.

1. What they reckon the favour of the enemy, *they ſaw that reſt was good.*

2. The natural advantages of their country, *the land it was pleaſant.*

1. *They ſee that reſt is good*; which ſhews us how their judgment is perverted, to ſuppoſe that there can be any ſuch thing as *reſt*, while the yoke of tyranny hangs upon their ſhoulders. Now, this opinion hath its only root in cowardiſe and lazineſs. They dread the noble toil of war, though the hazards people run that way, are far from being equal to thoſe of a ſlaviſh temper; you can ſcarce loſe ſo much by venturing, as you give away by ſubmitting. Whilſt the *Jews* reſiſted *Sennacherib*, they had what we call a chance for it; but he tells them roundly, if they *made an agreement with him by preſents*, it muſt end in his *taking them away from their own land. And is this the reſt wherewith they would cauſe the weary to lie down?* is this all that a people get by throwing themſelves upon the mercy of a tyrant? we may well ſay, *Ariſe and depart, this is not your reſt, becauſe it is polluted (d).*

2. The benefits of their country was another thing that ſoftened them into this compliance, *they ſaw that the land was pleaſant.* They had no mind to be carried off, becauſe here was enough for their own neceſſity, and for the humour of him to whom they paid tribute. But what a poor argument is this? if the place was ſo *good*, it deſerved to be fought for; if the produce of nature there was ſo great, it is pity that they ſhould have all the profit who had none of the pains. Thus they pleaded upon their return out of captivity,

(d) Mic. ii. 10.

captivity, *The land that thou hast given to our fathers, to eat the fruit thereof, and the good thereof, behold we are servants in it; and it yields much increase to the kings whom thou hast set over us because of our sins; also they have dominion over our bodies, and over our cattle at their pleasure, and we are in great distress* (*e*).

Thus have I laid out to you the former of these characters, and shewn you how poor a figure *Issachar* made in the world. But,

II. We have an account of better things in the blessing that he pronounceth upon another tribe. *Dan shall judge his people like one of the tribes of Israel: Dan shall be a serpent by the way, and an adder in the path, that bites his horse's heels, so that his rider falls backward. I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord.*

What is said of this brave people, is so plain a reverse to the meanness of the other, that a very little enlargement will serve here.

1. He begins with a new sort of language to give us the description of these. What they did would be worthy the name they derived from their father; *Dan shall judge his people like one of the tribes of Israel.*

2. We have the measures that he will take in order to it; and that is, the use both of his policy and courage: he is like *a serpent by the way, and an adder in the path*; and, rather than be trampled on, *he will bite the horses heels*; he will undermine the foundations of tyranny, *so that the rider shall fall backward.*

3. These noble designs are what *Jacob* recommends to the blessing of God, in that prophetic rapture, *I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord.*

(1.) We have a general honour put upon them. *Dan shall judge his people like one of the tribes of Israel.* What judging of his people means, I had occasion to shew you the last year, that it includes an execution

(*e*) Neh. ix. 36, 37.

of their laws, and a defending of their liberties from any that would oppreſs them. And this we find that *Samſon* did, who was *of that tribe*, and paid leſs regard to an enemy, in whoſe country he lived, than any of the judges. Now, do but conſider how this is placed in a full oppoſition to what was ſaid of *Iſſachar*; and from thence you may collect, that thoſe rulers do not *judge their people*, who perſuade them to *bow down under two burdens:* theſe are inconſiſtent with one another.

But what I would obſerve to you, is, the honourable turn he gives this, that it is doing *like one of the tribes of Iſrael:* as if they that neglect it were ſunk below the name. But *Dan* kept up the dignity of his family, and ſhewed that his deſcent from ſo many Patriarchs was not in vain. Thoſe ancient worthies, whom GOD had called out from the reſt of the world, led him the way to it. One of the moſt remarkable things that *Abraham* did in a public manner, was the taking of *five kings captive (f)*; though the people, in whoſe quarrel he mingled himſelf, are *the firſt rebels* we read of: he had armour ready for three hundred and eighteen men, trained up in his houſe. Upon his return from this ſlaughter, *Melchiſedek*, *the prieſt of the moſt high God*, *meets him*, and gives him a ſolemn *bleſſing* in his name who is *the poſſeſſor of heaven and earth.* And though it is true, he refuſed to be *made rich* by the ſpoils, yet the right that he had to bring down and plunder ſo many tyrants, appears from his paying tithes to *Melchiſedek*; for we cannot think that he would have brought *robbery for a burnt-offering.* *Jacob* recovered a part of the land *with his ſword, and his bow*, out of the hand of the *Amorites*; nay, he had the name of *Iſrael* given him in the field of battle, becauſe *by his ſtrength he laid hold of the angel, and had power both with God and man, and prevailed:* ſo that cowardice, in any of his poſterity,

(f) Gen. xiii. 1, 2.

poſterity, was a departure from that noble ſpirit their fathers had been eminent for.

And eſpecially, if you will conſider them as a people ſet apart to the worſhip of GOD, they were bound to run all hazards in defending what he gave them. When they were frighted with the *Anakims*, faint-hearted, and durſt not go on, it was acting ſo far below themſelves, that he will ſcarce own them to be his people; but ſays, that it is *a generation that do err in their hearts, they knew not his ways.* Their ſpirits had a wrong turn, and he ſwore, *that they ſhall never enter into his reſt*; and if they ſhould allow an enemy to break in upon the land of their poſſeſſion, it was diſhonourable to their name: but *Dan* bears up the old figure, and in *judging of his people, is like one of the tribes of Iſrael.*

(2.) Here are three ways that he takes to do it. Where you may obſerve,

1. The policy and wiſdom of this people: they are compared to *ſerpents* and *adders.*

2. Their courage, or the hazard they run: they will throw themſelves into the *path*, venture being cruſhed, rather than loſe their end.

3. Their reſolution to have the bleſſing whatever it coſt them: if they cannot diſmount a tyrant by mere force, they will *bite his horſe's heels, ſo that the rider ſhall fall backward.*

1. They are repreſented as a wiſe and well inſtructed people; *a ſerpent in the way, an adder in the path.* Doubtleſs *Iſſachar* thought it a good *prudential* to humble themſelves, and hold their lives upon no other tenure than the will of a prince; but *this their way was their folly. Dan* takes his maxims as they riſe from the plain welfare of the community: he will neither be hectored nor wheedled out of his privileges; he will loſe them neither by war nor treaty: as he is ſerpent enough to underſtand what is beſt for him;

him; ſo, like *the adder, he ſtops his ears againſt the voice of the charmer, charming never ſo wiſely.*

The want of ſuch a ſpirit is the preſage of ruin. *Thou haſt hid their hearts from underſtanding, therefore thou ſhalt not exalt them* (*g*). CHRIST himſelf hath bid his people take to them the wiſdom of the ſerpent; though here I would not have you miſtake this for the mere *wrigling* of that creature. Fraud and artifice, lurking ways, and lying words, are as much below the wiſdom that will ſave a nation, as they are againſt the honeſty that muſt ſave a ſoul. Thoſe men that came to *David*, and *had underſtanding of the times, and knew what Iſrael ought to do*, found that the wiſdom of the ſerpent was conſiſtent with the innocence of the dove.

2. Beſides a capacity to contrive what is beſt, here is a courage to execute it. This is a tribe that *Moſes* ſpeaks well of in the bleſſing that he gave them. *Dan is a lion's whelp, and he ſhall leap from Baſhan* (*h*). And we may obſerve a character of that ſort in the verſe before us, that he will venture himſelf as *a ſerpent in the way*, as *an adder in the path*; he will run the hazard of being trampled under foot, rather than take up with the poor and ſcanty terms that an enemy gives him. It is better being cruſhed at once, than condemned to a miſerable exiſtence: and theſe are things that will deliver a people over to the voice of fame: the good eſteem and hearty wiſhes of the world will be to ſuch as *offer themſelves willingly, and jeopard their lives in the high places of the field.*

3. They are determined to have the bleſſing at any expence: nor will they loſe things for want of mere names and forms; they will endeavour to bring down a tyrant by his own methods, if all the reſt ſhall fail: and when he deſigns to ride over Liberty and Religion, if they cannot ſtop his career, they will break his neck; the

(*g*) Job xvii. 4. (*h*) Deut. xxxiii. 22.

the very *horſe's heels*, which ſhould have ruined them, ſhall receive the wound that will prove fatal to him. And indeed when a people are thus inclined to *looſe the bands* of their captivity, it is no very hard matter to humble the wicked by the meaſures they have taken. Violence and iniquity do not ſo eaſily carry their load, but in a little time, their *rider may fall backward.*

(3.) When *Jacob* hath thus deſcribed his ſon by the brave meaſures that he will take, he recommends the whole deſign to the bleſſing of GOD; *I have waited for thy ſalvation, O Lord.*

Some imagine that the good old Patriarch was, at this time, almoſt ſpent upon his death-bed with going ſo far as he had done; and in theſe words he takes breath again: others think there is in them the horror of that idolatry that he ſaw the tribe of *Dan* would run into. But if you will take them for a pauſe, it is a ſign, that what he had ſaid of a people getting back their liberties, was of ſo much value with him, that his ſoul can reſt a while upon it, before he proceeds to the other bleſſings.

Or you may underſtand it, as ſeveral would do, for a perſonal wiſh, *q. d.* "Let me turn aſide for a "moment from telling what will happen to you, and "ſpend one thought upon myſelf. You hear what "*Iſſachar* will give up, and *Dan* retrieve; but theſe "things belong to a world I am going from. There "is ſomething nearer me than your proſperity; *I* "*have waited for thy ſalvation, O Lord.*" If you take it thus, it tells us, That for good men to know that they who come after them will be zealous for GOD, and truly concerned for the public intereſt, is one cordial in a dying hour; as *David* ſaith to *Solomon*, *I go the way of all the earth; but be thou ſtrong, and ſhew thyſelf a man* (*i*).

But I ſee no reaſon why *the ſalvation* that he *waited for*, may not be connected to the ways that *Dan* would take

(*i*) 1 Kings ii. 2.

take in *judging his people.* And then it includes in it theſe three things.

1. His hearty wiſhes to ſo good a cauſe, *q. d.* "This will be thy temper, and my bleſſing go along "with it. It is what I think of with pleaſure, and in "ſome of my laſt breath commit thee to the favour "of heaven: *The God before whom my fathers walked,* "*the Angel that redeemed me from all evil, eſtabliſh the* "*work of thine hand.*"

And this we have had many examples of; though good people were juſt at the gates of glory, yet they could not take leave of thoſe that ſtayed behind, without a teſtimony for the cauſe they had been engaged in: which ought to be of the greateſt value with us, that ſuch a number of excellent perſons have died praying for *the peace of our Jeruſalem.* They have ſpoke well of the Liberties of mankind, when themſelves were leaving all things of that ſort; and we cannot think that GOD would let them go out of the world, either with a lie in their mouths, or a trifle in their hearts.

2. When he adds, *I have waited for thy ſalvation*; it may be underſtood as a direction to thoſe brave people, to tell them, they muſt hope for ſucceſs in a religious way. Second cauſes are employed; but the good old man would let them know, that *their ſalvation is of the Lord:* and if they will conquer in earneſt, they muſt be a people that *wait for it.*

This comprehends the duty that they owe to him, their dependence upon his care, their jealouſy for his honour. The profane, the unclean, the evil doers do not come into the number. If they have any hopes of being delivered, it is from ſomething elſe, *for God is not in all their thoughts.* They that uſe his name without reverence, and his people without pity, cannot think that he hath any pleaſure in their ways. But *Jacob* would have them give all their counſels and attempts a ſerious tincture, for when *the high praiſes*

of

of God are in their mouths, it will add a weight to *the two-edged sword that is in their hands* (*k*).

3. This seems to be an act of his faith in the great MESSIAH; for it is under this name that another good old man received him: *Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation* (*l*). Nor could this be thought improper to mingle with the zeal they had for civil liberties: it was by a *faith* in him that *the elders obtained a good report*, in *subduing kingdoms, working righteousness, stopping the mouths of lions, waxing valiant in fight, and turning to flight the armies of the aliens* (*m*). The believer hath in him the truest courage. There is nothing in any one doctrine of Christianity that will tie up the hands of an injured people. One that hath *tasted that the Lord is gracious*, must have pity to the desolations of mankind. He cannot endure to see that nature ruined by a tyrant, that hath been honoured by a SAVIOUR.

And then besides, as the kingdom of a MESSIAH extends itself, it will *proclaim liberty to the captives*. It is an institution, as well as a prophecy, that there shall be *no hurting nor destroying in all his holy mountain*; and he is then said to *take to himself his great power and reign, when he destroys them that destroy the earth* (*n*).

And again, one that hath faith in JESUS, is waiting for that time, when *Kings shall shut their mouths at him*; *Princes shall see and arise*, and he will *strike through* Monarchs *in the day of his wrath*, and wrench his glory out of their hands who have taken it from him.

Again, waiting for salvation, prepares a man for the day of battle. A Christian does not fight upon those hazards that others do, who lose two lives at once, that which drops in the field, and that which is eternal

(*k*) Psal. cxlix. 6.
(*l*) Luke ii. 29, 30.
(*m*) Heb. xi. 33, 34.
(*n*) Rev. xi. 18.

eternal. The believer in these dangers takes himself to be *fighting the good fight, and keeping the faith*; and if *his course* is at an end in this attempt, it will be *finished with joy*.

And thus have I set before you the two tempers that distinguished these tribes. Here is *death and life, and cursing and blessing*: the choice must now be your own act. My time hath suffered me to do little more than take the words to pieces, and consider the parts of them asunder; you will easily apply what you have heard these two ways.

1. Into a full resentment of those doctrines that would persuade you out of your liberties upon the same terms that *Issachar* parted with theirs. It is pity that human nature itself should be so far debased; but it is with an aggravation that we see the holy name of CHRIST hath been blasphemed; that those mysteries must be our choice, which was the *Romans* abhorrence; as the Apostle saith in another case; it is *a fornication not so much as named among the Gentiles*. Do not take it for a small matter, for at this gap do they throw in all the superstitions of worship, their *damnable doctrines*, as well as their cruel measures. It is by this means they will steal away your Religion, and fill the nation with darkness and blood.

2. This calls us up to the praises of GOD, who delivered us from the stupidity of *Issachar*, and inspired us with the temper of *Dan*, at our Revolution.

I am sensible this mercy hath had all the regards that the children of *Israel* gave to the *manna* which fell from heaven. At first we gathered it, we tasted it, lived upon it, and reckoned it *angels food*; now it is but *light bread*, and we want *flesh to eat*; nay, as it is said of *Sodom*, we are *going out after strange flesh*: and I doubt not but the parallel would hold farther, that it must come as soon *out of our nostrils* as it did out of theirs. What they desired in their *lust*, they enjoyed with

with a *plague*, for *ere it was chewed, while it was yet between their teeth, the wrath of God fell upon them.*

But I would recommend the great things that he hath done for us to your value and care; and this can be expreſſed in no better way, than by *walking in the light, while we have the light*; *a converſation that becomes the Goſpel*; an abhorrence of any thing that would mingle with your Religion, or defile your Practice; a pity to the poor Proteſtants in *France*, upon whom *the clouds have returned after the rain*; a having no *fellowſhip with the unfruitful works of darkneſs.* And whoever they are that have no compaſſion for blood, no reverence for leagues, *O my ſoul! come not thou into their ſecret, unto their aſſembly, mine honour, be not thou united! for in their anger they ſlew a man, and in their ſelf-will they digged down a wall:* let ſuch *counſel of the wicked be far from me. I have waited for thy ſalvation, O Lord!*

SERMON

SERMON XIV.

PREFACE.

THE laſt year I publiſhed a fifth of *November* Sermon, under this name, *The aſs, or the ſerpent; or a compariſon between the tribes of* Iſſachar *and* Dan, *in their regard for civil liberty.* Though this title is founded on the very words of my text, yet I believe the oddneſs of it has made ſome people uneaſy. The *Examiner*, who is hired to abuſe thoſe that are ſingled out for him, and the *Poſt-Boy*, who is commanded to do it, have each of them, in their different ways, treated me as they have done the beſt men in the nation; and I think it ſo far from a diſhonour to have my name thrown into thoſe papers, which are but the common-ſhore of ſcandal, that it gives me a ſatisfaction to be numbered with perſons *whoſe works praiſe them in the gates.* And it is a pleaſure that I have not done any thing vile enough againſt the Proteſtant Religion, and the Liberties of my country, to be commended by thoſe two authors. Let them write and rail on, they are juſt in that very way with me that I wiſh for.

Another gentleman, who has a mind to be as obſcure as his works are, has writ a pamphlet, which he calls (as he truly may) *Some ſhort Reflections upon*

Mr Bradbury's late libel, &c. The ſum of this book, is to make a rumbling with *rabbies*, *fathers*, and modern furies; then to repreſent me as dangerous to the government, that it is time our Toleration was taken away; and to ſupport theſe ill-natured whims, he has given ſuch paſſages as quotations out of my Sermon, which every reader knows were never in it. This could only be poſſible to one who has taken care not to be known, that he may be in no danger of bluſhing. We are now peſtered in all our aſſemblies, both religious and civil, with a ſort of officers, called *Lions*; to thoſe political brutes I would recommend my friend, and thoſe of his reach, as a good ſett of *Jackalls*. If it is the perſon I take it for, he has writ a great many little books, and to ſo little purpoſe, that as he never was anſwered, ſo I dare engage he never will be; for it will be always impoſſible to confute a way of arguing, which it is ſcandalous to imitate.

Beſides theſe, I have a whole preface flung at me by a clergyman of *yearly fame*, Mr *Luke Milbourne*, who at certain times does duly tell us, that he is *Preſbyter of the church of England*. From him, I muſt confeſs, I expected to have at leaſt good words. A man that has writ a tranſlation of the *Pſalms* and *Thomas a Kempis*, and was ſo conſcious to his ſufficiency in poetry, as to give us notes upon *Dryden*'s *Virgil*; from ſuch an one, who would not promiſe himſelf an eaſier temper and much politer language than a poor *muddy curate* can come up to? But, alas! how dangerous is it for a fine pen to write *thirtieth of January Sermons*, or any thing in defence of an *aſs*, or a *tory?* you ſhall ſee how ſoft and clean his ſtile is: he tells us, that "*he read the aſs in every* "*page*; *that the preacher of this diſcourſe is H. Pe-* "*ters junior*, alias *Thomas Bradbury*, *a predicant of* "*D. W. miſſion*," (that phraſe wants a note more than *Dryden* did) "*and bleſſed almoſt with a double portion* "*of*

" *of his ordinary fiery ſpirit, and ungrateful inſolence.*" After this, he gives me a name that may run very eaſy off his tongue, but I dare hardly venture it upon mine, *a theological boutefeu.* He has pronounced this ſentence upon that ſmall work, that " *it is the moſt* " *conſummate piece of ignorance and impudence that* " *ever was vented ſince the days of his anceſtor Hugh* " *of infamous memory:*" and he is ſo pleaſed with making himſelf my godfather by this title, that *young Hugh* and *ſecond Peters* come over and over again. I can away with his calling me a " *preſump-* " *tuous ſon of ignorance, and outrageous incendiary,*" when he has thrown off the command of modeſty, juſtice and reaſon ſo far, as to comprehend the whole body of Diſſenters in this character, " *They are a tribe* " *of ſtrong aſſes, couching down between two burdens,* " *atheiſm and phanaticiſm.*"

I muſt confeſs, I have no inclination to venture myſelf into a quarrel with one who is troubled with a *chronical fury*, and eſpecially ſo near the return of his *fit*; but the deference I owe to that *good cauſe*, which to me appears both true and glorious, has ſo much command over me, that I will give my free thoughts upon every thing that bears the face of an argument againſt it in his Preface and Sermon. I find he lays a great deal of weight upon any good that is ſaid of an *aſs*, or of *Iſſachar* in ſcripture, or any thing ill that we read of in the *ſerpent*, or the tribe of *Dan*. Nay, he pretends to hook me upon " *valuing* " *thoſe, who like the adder ſtop their ears to the voice* " *of the charmer, though he charm never ſo wiſely.*" But, if this muſt go for reaſoning, I do not ſee how any one compariſon in the Bible can give us the leaſt idea of right or wrong. There are few alluſions that may not be turned ſeveral ways, and the ſame metaphor does equally ſerve a commendation, and a reproach. Will any one ſay that when *a wicked ruler over a poor people* is called a *roaring lion*, that it is

with a reputation to him, (*Prov.* xxv. 15.) becauſe GOD himſelf has expreſſed his own providence by that ſimilitude, (*Iſa.* xxxi. 4.)? or can there be a perſon ſo weak and wicked as to think better of *a thief in the night*, from our LORD's reſembling his own coming by it? It is no fault in the ſerpent (if ſhe has that faculty) to *ſtop her ear againſt the charmers*; if nature has given her that defence againſt an enemy, it is to be uſed; and yet this thing that is innocent enough in that creature, may be a proper alluſion to the vileneſs of thoſe great ones that *will not ſpeak righteouſneſs, nor judge uprightly, but weigh the violence of their hands in the earth*, Pſal. lviii. 1, 2, 4, 5.

He inſinuates, that this could not be underſtood in a contempt of *Iſſachar*; "firſt, *becauſe it is called* "*Jacob's bleſſing his ſons*; and ſecondly, *Moſes ſpeaks* "*well of that tribe.*" But how little ſway theſe things ought to have, will ſoon appear; it is ſaid that *he bleſſed every one of them according to his bleſſing*; but it is impoſſible to underſtand all that he ſays of them in that ſenſe. Was it bleſſing *Reuben*, when he called him *unſtable as water*, and foretold he *ſhould not excel?* I am afraid, by the ſpirit that foams in ſome late ſermons, that we have preachers who would like the temper of *Simeon and Levi*, in being *brethren* and having *inſtruments of cruelty in their habitations: in their anger they will ſlay a man, and in their ſelf-will dig down a wall*; but certainly they are not ſo mad as to call the lot of theſe two tribes a bleſſing; when their pious father (who might foreſee that the prieſthood would ſpring from one of them) ſaid, *Curſed be their anger, for it was fierce, and their wrath, for it was cruel; I will divide them in Jacob, and ſcatter them in Iſrael.* I do not ſuppoſe that *Moſes*'s bleſſing was inconſiſtent with *Jacob*'s; and yet the one may admire the very tribe that the other condemns, becauſe all that deſcended from it were neither involved

involved in one guilt, nor sharers in the same glory. *Jacob* calls *Simeon* and *Levi* murderers, and truce-breakers; *Moses* saith nothing at all of the former, but the latter he admires for what they did in the great revolt at *Massah* and *Meribah*, and recommends him to the blessing of GOD as *his holy one*.

The little flings that he has at those of a former generation, calling them "*rebellious saints, execrable* "*regicides, whom God permitted to go out of the world* "*with a lie in their mouths*;" are so profane and unbecoming one who knows that *vengeance belongs to God*, and so needless fifty years after their deaths, and is such a *railing accusation as Michael the arch-angel durst not use to the devil himself*, that I will not retort it. Though what does this gentleman think of *Fenwick*, *Friend*, *Parkins*, *Charnock*, *Rookwood*, *Ashton*, and others who were executed for a design of murdering King *William*, fairly proved upon them; and yet avowed it, had absolution given them, and declared it *agreeable to the doctrine of the church of England?* His flirts at *the original contract*, and telling us, that "*all these civil liberties are but the chimeras of* "*our own brain*," shews that the Revolution is a mystery to him, if it be not a burden. In that great and noble vote that *loosed the bands from our necks*, the Lords and Commons declared, that King *James* had broke the *original contract*: and how well it becomes a man who is so afraid to *speak evil of dignities*, to be merry with the solemnity of these terms, is what the world will judge of. Would he persuade us that there is no such thing as Liberty? or does he think that a few noisy unconnected sentences, which may do well enough for a rattle, must ever pass for an argument? He covers his reflections by saying, that "*what the ten tribes got by their revolt was what* "*we would now be at*, viz. *A toleration of any reli-* "*gion but the true*;" which is false both in us and them. Till he could prove it against me, either as

my declared opinion, or a natural conſequence from my principles, he ſhould not condemn me as guilty of that which I reckon the vileſt ſlander in the world, *viz.* the hindring any from the worſhip of GOD, according to the beſt light they have. The ten tribes did not bring idolatry into their *claim of right*, they complained of *a heavy yoke upon them*, which the King, upon the advice of his *new Miniſtry* threatned to make worſe; for this they *rebelled*, and did well in it: there was a divine prophecy and approbation upon that great act; and it is a thing not blamed in Scripture, that when *Rehoboam* ſent *Adoram*, *who was over the tribute*, and therefore it is likely had multiplied their taxes, that *they ſtoned him*, *and he died*. *Jeroboam* was not guilty in having another throne, but in filling the worſhip of GOD with human inventions. It was by this, and not his rebellion, that *he made Iſrael to ſin*.

His violence to expreſſions that are eaſy enough, is below a man of ſuch learning as I know he has, and the temper that I hear runs through his converſation. Thus, becauſe I had ſaid that the *fearful and unbelieving* ſtand in the front of ſinners, (*Rev.* xxi) he ſaith, "I pretend to fill hell with thoſe that *fear God and the* "*King*, and am againſt *working out my ſalvation with* "*fear and trembling*, and am for *feeding myſelf with-* "*out fear*, and am like the *Leviathan*, *made without* "*fear*." Certainly this man's concordance is to him only a heap of ſtones, that he may pelt as long as a word laſts.

He ſurpriſes me with ſaying, that "he never writ "for paſſive obedience;" and if ſo, Why is he thus angry that I have writ againſt it? The examples that he produces out of Scripture, I ſhall conſider; but his *Thebean Legion* he may take back again if he pleaſes. What does he mean by '*Moſes*'s not oppoſing *Pha-* '*raoh*, and ſaying, that *he was then at the head of* '*the greater army?*' Were not *Iſrael* apprehenſive of

of their danger? Whatever they might be in numbers, they were unarmed againſt *all the glory of Egypt*. *Pharaoh* thought himſelf ſecure of them, and made no doubt of it when he ſaid, *I will purſue, I will overtake, I will deſtroy, &c.* And could *Moſes* tie his hands with any ſenſe of allegiance? Was *Pharaoh then* their Sovereign? *David*'s carriage to *Saul*, I have conſidered in the following Sermon: but I wonder he ſhould bring *Ahab*'s ſurviving the murder of *Naboth*, as an inſtance that Kings are to do what miſchief they will, and none is to withſtand them. Did not the Prophet tell him upon that wickedneſs, *that he ſold himſelf to do evil*, and that *where the dogs had licked Naboth's blood, they ſhould lick his?* And was not *Jehu anointed to cut off the houſe of Ahab his maſter?* And to inſpire him in that act of national juſtice, the night before he did it, GOD brought freſh upon his mind *the blood of Naboth*. I know that *Jezebel* talked very much the language of our author; ſhe that made GOD her jeſt, and the King her tool, proclaimed a faſt, and had a man condemned for blaſpheming GOD and the King: ſhe was full of hiſtory and zeal againſt Regicides, and could clamour as loud from a window, as ſome do from a pulpit, *Had Zimri peace that ſlew his maſter?* Though her whoredoms and witchcrafts are ſo many, yet ſhe gets into all the cant of loyalty; but as *God is not to be mocked*, ſo her name is branded, her end is dreadful, they hurled her down in a moment, for the horſes to trample, and the dogs to eat.

He has drawn up one charge againſt me, which if true, it is pity I ſhould ever enter the pulpit; and if falſe, it is as great a ſhame that he ſhould: 'I can-'not find, ſays he, one ſingle text quoted, but which 'he has blaſphemed, profaned and ridiculed to the 'utmoſt of his power.' This is a great deal more than *miſtaking a Scripture*; that is what I am as liable to as another, and I thank this author for giving me one inſtance of it. I had ſaid that *Abraham led five*

Kings captive, which I own was a wrong both to the ſtory, and to my argument; for it is plain, he *killed* them, which I might have remembred from the *New Teſtament*, as well as the *Old*. The Apoſtle thought it an action ſo glorious, that he gives us the time of *Melchizedek*'s meeting him, it was *as he returned from the ſlaughter of the Kings*; and if this Gentleman or any one elſe will ſhew me that I have miſtaken a text, I ſhall freely own myſelf his proſelyte; but for blaſpheming, profaning and ridiculing that Word which I take for my *only rule* of faith, worſhip and practice, and by which I know *the ſecrets of all hearts will be judged*, it is what I have always abhorred, and, thro' the grace of GOD, ſhall never allow myſelf in.

He is ſo afraid of coming into temper, that when he owns I have ſaid well, and cannot find in his heart to rail at *me*, he turns his fury upon the *good old cauſe*, and tells us that 'the friends of that carry on all their 'deſigns by fraud and lying.' What is that to me if they do? I will own that a bleſſing will not go along with ſuch meaſures as deſtroy the juſtice and equity that ſhould keep the world together; and whoever they are that break ſolemn leagues, that take oaths to one Prince and think of another, that abjure the ſame creature as an impoſture whom they wiſh for as a Sovereign, that endeavour to fill one Houſe of Parliament with a guſh of new members, and the other by mobbing and bribing, who can adviſe the polling of men in their graves, the *Indies*, or ſuch as have no right; let their party be what it will, I am ſo far from approving of ſuch ways, that though they be ſprung from the good old cauſe itſelf, *may their end be according to their works*. However I cannot but let the author know, he is either unacquainted with that ſtory, or has a mind that others ſhould be ſo; had he read my Lord *Clarendon*'s account, and reſolved to be honeſt, he would fill his pages with ſomething more to the purpoſe than *noiſy exclamations*, that convince the

the world of nothing but the writer's emptineſs. I have read many a Thirtieth of *January* Sermon, and they are ſo much the ſame that I can obſerve very little new in them but a tranſpoſition of terms: let but any one take a few rattling words for his materials, ſuch as Schiſmatics, Atheiſts, Rebels, Traitors, Miſcreants, Monſters, Enthuſiaſts, Hypocrites, LORD's Anointed, Sacred Majeſty, GOD's Vicegerent, Impious, Blaſpheme, Damnation; ſtir theſe together in a warm head, and after a very little ſhaking, bring them out, ſcum and all, diſtribute them into ſeveral periods, and your work is half done: if ſuch expreſſions as Religion, Conſcience, Juſtice, Privilege of Parliament, Innocent Blood, Liberty and Property come in your way, take off the crudities from ſome of them by ſoftning epithets, call it mock Parliament, falſe Religion, pretended Conſcience, and tell the world roundly, that their privileges, trade, civil-rights and liberties are chimeras; that ſuch talk ſmells rank of Forty-one, and is a certain mark of a villain, and an enemy to the government.

But ſhall filling an hour with ſuch ſtuff as this go for a *faſt, and an acceptable day to the* LORD? Is this being *humbled* for our ſins? When *Ezra bluſhed* and was aſhamed to lift up his head, does he mean no more than a *fluttered face* and glowing cheeks, that take all their heat from an inward paſſion? How have the ſwearers and drunkards been hardned by hearing godlineſs itſelf ſo ill matched to the epithets that ſuch as Mr *Milbourne* have given it? He that allows himſelf ſuch aukward words as *hypocritical and rebellious Saints*, has reaſon to fear that ſome will ſo confound theſe ideas, as to think that to be a Saint is to be a Rebel. And how many are there that after ſuch diſcourſes *bleſs themſelves in their own hearts, though they commit uncleanneſs with greedineſs?* And beſides, I muſt tell him, though ſuch Preaching has been very agreeable

agreeable to the luſt of Princes, yet it has often proved fatal to their thrones. I have thought that the Thirtieth of *January* Sermons coſt King *James* his three crowns. *Men of corrupt minds* were ſtill addreſſing themſelves to his humour, till they puſhed him on to the fate that became public enough. And when they had cried up his power as ſacred, and told him all his actions were uncontroled, he no ſooner took them at their word, but they left him in the lurch: and he judged extremely right in his troubles, when he cried out, with a concern that I ſhould have pitied, upon ſeeing a Clergyman, *Ah, Sir, it is the men of your cloth that have brought me to this.* It was the unhappineſs of that Prince to believe thoſe in their Sermons and Addreſſes who never believed themſelves. They may talk of Paſſive Obedience, Reſignation, Meekneſs and Patience; but the general filthineſs of their lives, and their haſtineſs to anger with all the world, make them a wretched party for any King to truſt in. The *Memorial of the Church of England* tells us indeed, that *Non-Reſiſtance* has been always their *principle*; but they confeſs, *nature* is apt to *rebel* againſt *principle*; and we believe them when they ſay, that in thoſe caſes *the odds are on Nature's ſide.* Such a nice diſtinction as this do we find in the *Addreſs* preſented to the Queen ſome time ago by *the Clergy of London:* they call her Majeſty's authority *irreſiſtible*, and yet the next breath ſucks that in, for they ſay, 'as they have withſtood, ſo they will withſtand again;' nay, Mr *Milbourne* himſelf has his thoughts lying ſo looſe as to ſay, *page* 2. 'That if the *Jews* could have 'proved their charge (againſt our SAVIOUR) or our 'Infidels (againſt King *Charles* the Firſt) the Croſs 'and the Scaffold would have been deſerved.' So that he does not by this ſeem to be angry at their accuſing and trying him, but their not proving any thing; I am ſorry this ſhould fall under the eye of any

any *Republican*, who I fear will be apt to say, they were not like to *prove* when he would not *plead*. I dare say the good *Presbyter of the Church of England* had no design to betray the royal cause into so much contempt: my charity for him makes me think, that sometimes he writes he knows not what. There is another passage so unguarded, which had it come from an antimonarchial writer in this government and ministry, wo be to him, *page* 14. 'Where wo-'men are concerned in robberies, those robberies are 'attended with murder, that *timorous sex* concluding, 'that themselves and their companions can never be 'safe, so long as there are any left alive who may 'discover them.'

He is angry that I say, There is nothing in any one doctrine of Christianity that will tie up the hands of an injured people. This he calls 'a discovery reserved 'for long-headed Popes, and says it is fit to be re-'vived by the *Sidneys*, *Lockes*, *Hoadleys*, *Burnets*, '*Bradburys*, *&c.*' I heartily thank him for putting me into such company; and if he likes to herd with the *Sibthorps*, *Manwarings*, *Hickes's*, *Sacheverells*, *Wel—ns*, *Lesleys* and *Ropers*, both sides are pleased: the great *Algernon Sidney* writ with *a spirit* that none of his adversaries could *gainsay* or *resist*, and therefore they cut off his head: but no person will much value the poor fling of our author who reads the book of that truly noble person, *by it he being dead yet speaketh*. And I cannot but think there is a great deal of difference between a man's sealing the cause of Liberty and that of Tyranny with his blood: indeed we seldom hear of any volunteers for the latter, who make a King a present of their heads by way of sample to their doctrine; but would not such an one *die as a fool dies?* How intrepid have those of the other sort come to the block? And, for my part, I have that veneration for what a serious man says in so full a

prospect

proſpect of eternity, that I ſhould not much heed the whole volley of the Clergy againſt a certain Gentleman on the ſcaffold, who told the Executioner, 'Before thou canſt ſay, Here is the head of a Traitor; 'the angels will have cried to heaven, We come 'with the ſoul of a Saint.' As much above the ill manners of this author is that learned Biſhop whom he joins with *Hobbes*. His *Hiſtory of the Reformation*, and his late *Introduction* to the third volume; his many diſcourſes from the preſs and pulpit, the fervour and argument of thoſe warnings he has given the nation, will convince any one, that a perſon who can charge him with *reviving Popiſh doctrines*, is reſolved to live within no rules, either of truth or decency.

The texts that he throws together, of "turning "the other cheek, doing good to ſuch as hate us, "recompenſing to no man evil for evil, not avenging "ourſelves, being obedient to maſters, not only to "to the good and gentle, but alſo to the froward," do no more regard our behaviour to a Prince than to any other enemy; and if he takes them in an abſolute ſenſe, they as much oblige his non-reſiſtance to a coxcomb that ſhall huff him in the ſtreets, or a litigious neighbour, as to his Sovereign. But how little are Kings obliged to ſuch arguments, as call for the ſubjects duty to them, on the ſuppoſition of their being the greateſt villains and plagues on the earth? Though I have run this length, I cannot forbear giving the Reader a ſpecimen of this author's expoſition on thoſe words, "Rulers are not a terror to "good works, but to the evil." Would not any one have underſtood this to be a deſcription of good Magiſtrates, ſuch as are called *the ordinance of God*; and from whom, if we *do good*, we may expect *praiſe of the ſame?* Such are *God's Miniſters attending continually upon this very thing*. Now all this our author can

can take in such a sense, that it shall be true of *Nero*, *Caligula*, or any Tyrant, nay of a fool or a sot, who *attends to nothing*. He makes those characters not refer to the Sovereign but the people, and his three propositions from the text are these.

" That he, who exercises himself in good works, " never entertains any fears or jealousies of the su- " preme Magistrate, or his lawful Governors: And,

" That he, who exercises himself in that which is " evil, is always under violent suspicions of his law- " ful Governors: And,

" That he, who is full of guilt and suspicion, will " always study to revenge himself on that power " which he stands in fear of."

You see he is resolved to bring the *mountain* to *Mahomet:* but is not making the Scriptures to mean *any thing*, the way to have them mean *nothing?* Is it not insolent to the last degree that a man will rather shock the sense and solemnity of God's word, than be patient of any danger to his own scheme? At this rate of turning things, *David*'s sending out spies to know whether *Saul* was coming after him, his communing with *Jonathan*, and saying, " There is but a " step between me and death," are so many marks of an *evil doer*. The poor *French* Protestants, who fled from a fine country, could not entertain suspicions of their lawful Governor, unless they were *villains*. No wonder that a great part of the Sermon is a panegyric on *persecution*, which I only say this in answer to; that it is pity but he was in *France*, where he might soon have as much of that blessing as would make his heart ake. But, as Mr *Johnson* observes, when those men admire sufferings for Religion, they never mean their own. Upon the whole, what can any person think of a writer, who is so free in charging

ing others with a profanation of Scripture? Can any one read this performance without thinking either the Text or the Preacher ridiculous? And is this the man who was to defend our Religion againſt the Deiſts? Will they ever think the better of revealed books, by his comments on them? When he writ in that controverſy, he either did it with ſuch a clamour and bitterneſs as he now uſes, or he did not: if he did, he ſpoiled a good cauſe with a foul ſpirit: if he did not, he has more *zeal* for the luſt of his Prince, than the divinity of our SAVIOUR: but is it not time to *renounce thoſe hidden things of diſhoneſty?* This is too groſs to have it called *walking in craftineſs*, but it is *handling the Word of the* LORD *deceitfully*.

He concludes his Sermon with an account that 'London has a club of thoſe God-mocking wretches, 'who profane this day with impious feaſting.' As I never was preſent at ſuch an aſſembly, ſo it is but lately that I was well aſſured any perſons of note could be guilty of a thing ſo ludicrous; but I am ſatisfied, it has been done within theſe few years; though I can tell him, (that excepting one) all the perſons who met there, are ſuch as our author and his party do *now* admire for ſtanch Churchmen, and lovers of Monarchy; and much joy may he have of a flying ſquadron, who can ſtep ſo faſt from profaning a day to adore it. But if there is any thing of this kind, I know none ſo much to blame for it as thoſe high-flying Preachers that give the irritation. From this ſort of Sermons many, I ſhould fear, would come with either anger or mirth enough for ſuch a deſign. For, after they have attended on a *Parſon*, and find he has not the *law of truth in his mouth* (either truth of argument or facts) but inſtead of that, *iniquity* fires *in his lips*, they go away to be at once revenged on his malice, and diverted with his

his nonſenſe. I ſhould not have followed this author ſuch a length as I have done, if it had not kept me ſtill in view of that *principle*, upon which I ſubmit the Revolution and this Government as lawful, *viz. That if a Prince breaks the Fundamental Laws that ſecure the Rights and Liberties of his People, it is juſt for them to take their remedy.* If I had not believed this to be true, I muſt either have been a *Nonjuror* or a *Knave*. And that ſuch a turn as this is what the people of *Iſrael* were contending for, will, I hope, be evident from the ſtory on which I have founded the following Sermon.

SERMON

SERMON THE FOURTEENTH.

The Lawfulneſs of reſiſting Tyrants, argued from the Hiſtory of *David*, and in Defence of the Revolution.

Preached NOVEMBER 5, 1713.

1 CHRON. XII. 16, 17, 18.

And there came of the children of Benjamin and Judah to the hold unto David. And David went out to meet them, and anſwered and ſaid unto them, If ye be come peaceably unto me to help me, mine heart ſhall be knit unto you; but if ye be come to betray me to mine enemies, ſeeing there is no wrong in my hands, the God of our Fathers look thereon, and rebuke it. Then the ſpirit came upon Amaſai, who was chief of the captains, and he ſaid, Thine are we, David, and on thy ſide, thou ſon of Jeſſe. Peace, peace be unto thee, and peace be unto thine helpers, for thy God helpeth thee.

I Have choſen this text to ſerve your meditations on the wonders of this day, that at one view you may take in the caſe of two ages; and ſee that it always was, and always will be, both the duty and glory of a people to break any yoke that is hung upon their liberty: nor have I the leaſt fear to do this, at a time

when the cauſe itſelf is run down by *men of corrupt minds, and deſtitute of the truth, ſuppoſing that gain is godlineſs (a)*, whoſe only religion lies in their great places: this, I ſay, makes the deſign as dear to me as ever; becauſe theſe thoughts return on a day that is *much to be obſerved to the Lord in all our generations (b)*: and, I hope, *the wrath of man* ſhall be of little value with my ſoul, whilſt I am tracing the glories of ſuch a Providence, and calling over *the wonders of old*: it is, I confeſs, like *ſinging the ſongs of Zion on the banks of Babylon*; but though it be ſo, *rather than forget thee, O Jeruſalem! may my right hand forget her cunning (c)*.

The words I have now read give us a revolution, a turn of government very like our own; and it ſhall always make ſuch a diſpenſation the more ſacred to me, when I ſee it is *according to the pattern in the ſanctuary*. I ſhall take the ſervice of this text to the cauſe of liberty, two ways:

Firſt, As a vindication.

Secondly, As an account how ſuch a deſign is brought about. It is both an argument of its being lawful, and explains the way how it comes to be glorious; and the caſe of *Iſrael* at their revolution, is ſo very like *ours*, that I need give you no other application than what is mingled in the particulars as we go along.

Firſt, I take this text to be a plain and notorious argument that people have a right in themſelves to dethrone a tyrant; one that is in jeſt with their laws, and in earneſt with their lives, even though the man hath been called *the Lord's anointed*. This, every one knows, was the caſe of *Iſrael*, who had a King given them by God himſelf: they a long while groaned under the weight of his cruelty, and made good what *Samuel* foretold, *They cried to the Lord in that day, becauſe*

(a) 1 Tim. vi. 5.
(b) Exod. xii. 24.
(c) Pſalm cxxxvii.

becauſe of the King they had choſen (d); and now, at laſt, they reſolve to put life and liberty upon the ſame foot, that if both cannot be had, both ſhall be loſt: and unleſs you will ſuppoſe that theſe men ſtand in this chapter as rebels, without the fear of GOD before their eyes; if you believe, as any one muſt do, that the whole action appears in this ſtory as a thing right and good, all the parts of the text may be brought into the argument. If you look to the firſt verſe, you are told of ſome that *came to David to Ziklag, whilſt he kept himſelf cloſe becauſe of Saul the ſon of Kiſh, and they were among the mighty men, helpers of the war*; you have their names in the following verſes, they are *written among the living in Jeruſalem, that the ages to come may riſe up and call them bleſſed*; and in theſe words you meet with another number that are joined in the ſame cauſe.

That I may lead you into the argument, I will put my thoughts under theſe three heads:

I. Examine what opinion *David* himſelf had of the cauſe that theſe men of *Judah* and *Benjamin* came to help him in.

II. Shall anſwer an objection or two, and reconcile what *David* did now, to the ſcruples he had formerly. And,

III. Conſider what the army themſelves think of the deſign, who came to him, and the rather becauſe what they ſay is aſcribed to *the Spirit's falling upon Amaſai.*

I. I begin with *David*'s own opinion of the cauſe he was now engaged in; and I hope there is no need to anſwer any inſinuations, that what he ſaid was from a private view for himſelf and his own intereſt: we will not be amuſed by trifles of that nature, when GOD hath called him *a man after his own heart (e)*,

(d) 1 Sam. viii. 18. (e) 1 Sam. xiii. 14.

and called him ſo at the time that he was about to turn off *Saul*, and transfer the kingdom to him. He had now been ſeveral years in a kind of exile, *driven out from abiding in the inheritance of the Lord (f)*; and we read ſo much in the book of *Pſalms* of what paſſed between GOD and his ſoul in the wilderneſs, and all the places of his retreat, that it muſt be a maxim with us that he was then in the way of his duty; ſo that what he ſaith now to the men that joined him, could be no leſs than the ſolemn reſult of conſcience. It behoved him then, more than ever, to know that what he did was pleaſing in the ſight of GOD; and if he did not think it lawful to head an army againſt his King, he would never have been ſo profane as to uſe the ſacred name in the way that he doth; *If ye be come to help me, my heart ſhall be knit unto you; but if ye be come to betray me to mine enemies, ſeeing there is no wrong in my hands, the God of our fathers look on it, and rebuke it.*

Theſe are his words to the children of *Benjamin* and *Judah*, *that came to him in the hold.* This hold might be the *cave of Adullam*, or ſome other place of defence, as we find it is called, 1 *Sam.* xxii. 4. where you read that *David's father and mother abode with the king of Moab, all the while that he was in the hold:* and ſo in the next verſe, the prophet *Gad* ſaith to *David*, *Abide not in the hold:* but it is more probably the town of *Ziklag*, that had been given him by the king of the *Philiſtines*; there he dwelt *a full year and four months*, at which time, they that *favoured his righteous cauſe* had more opportunity of aſſembling to him, than they could have whilſt he was ſtrolling in the deſart of *Judah*; hither, among the reſt, the children of *Judah* and *Benjamin* repair, upon the ſame deſign that others did, to break off the yoke of *Saul*, and provide themſelves of a better king He hath a little ſuſpicion of thoſe that came to him from *Benjamin*, they

(f) 1 Sam. xxvi. 19.

they were of *Saul*'s tribe, and retained by blood and other obligations to his ſervice; ſo that we read of them, that they were *armed with bow, and could uſe both their right hand and left in hurling ſtones and ſhooting arrows out of a bow, even Saul's brethren of Benjamin (g)*; he had preferred them *of the children of Benjamin, the kindred of Saul three thouſand, for hitherto the greateſt part of them had kept the ward of the houſe of Saul (h)*. He thought to have them ſure by places, and argueth to thoſe principles in them that were the deareſt to himſelf; for ſome there are who have no influence upon any thing but the vices and corruption of thoſe they deal with; they do not pretend to convince your reaſon, but only *make proviſion for the fleſh to fulfil the luſts thereof:* thus did the King to his own family, *Hear me now, ye Benjamites, Will the ſon of Jeſſe give every one of you fields and vineyards, and make you all captains of thouſands, and captains of hundreds (i)?* and yet he was ſuſpicious of them then. Nothing is more dreadful to a tyrant, than men that will not be awed by the court where they live, but dare to be good in great places: thus were they at leaſt, in his opinion, *All of you have conſpired againſt me, and there is none that ſheweth me that my ſon hath made a league with the ſon of Jeſſe; and there is none of you is ſorry for me, or ſheweth unto me that my ſon hath ſtirred up my ſervants againſt me to lie in wait, as at this day (k)*. No, they were above taking honours to tell lies; though they were born of his family, and had offices in his palace, yet not a ſoul of them will compliment the King with truth or conſcience; theſe are dearer to them than any royal commands, and the only man he could find to his purpoſe, was *Doeg the Edomite:* he indeed accuſeth *David* and the high prieſt, and afterwards dips his hand in the blood *of fourſcore and five perſons that*

(*g*) 1 Chron. xii. 2.
(*h*) 1 Chron. xii. 29.
(*i*) 1 Sam xxii. 7.
(*k*) Sam. xxii. 8.

wore a linen ephod; and, like a true zealot for his prince, ſacks the city of the prieſts, *kills man, and woman, and child, and ſuckling:* he was before but *the chief of the herdſmen*, and for ſome notorious immorality, *detained before the Lord*; but after this conſummate wickedneſs, he is preferred, and *ſet over the ſervants of Saul*; that is, from a ranger of the foreſt, he is made ſteward of the houſhold. Theſe *Benjamites* abhorred a propoſal ſo baſe and vile as the king made to them, and take the firſt opportunity to deſert their maſter.

But *David*, who knew their obligations to *Saul*, could not meet them without a little mixture of ſuſpicion, in which he lays down ſeveral things that are arguments for the cauſe of liberty; *If you be come peaceably to me to help me, my heart ſhall be knit unto you; but if you be come to betray me to mine enemies, ſeeing there is no wrong in mine hands, the God of our fathers look thereon, and rebuke it.* Where you may obſerve,

1. He declares himſelf in a ſtate of war; he deſires their help; he tells them of his enemies, and who could theſe be but the men that followed him *as a partridge upon the mountains?* he ſingles out *Saul* from all the world, *leſt he tear my ſoul like a lion, rending it in pieces, while there is none to deliver (l)*; him he deſcribeth, *behold he traveleth with iniquity, and hath conceived miſchief, and brought forth falſhood (m)*; and the vengeance of GOD upon this perſon he waits to ſee, and promiſed to adore; *his miſchief ſhall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing ſhall come down upon his own pate (n)*; he doth not conſider that head as under a crown, but as covered with guilt; and *then*, ſaith he, *I will praiſe the Lord according to his righteouſneſs; I will ſing praiſe unto the name of the Lord moſt high (o).* It could not be underſtood of the

(*l*) Pſalm vii. 2.
(*m*) Pſalm vii. 14.
(*n*) Pſalm vii. 16.
(*o*) Pſalm vii. 17.

the *Philiſtines*, for there he was received with the utmoſt aſſurance, when *Achiſh* gave him a city, and ſaid of him, *He hath made his people Iſrael utterly to abhor him, therefore he ſhall be my ſervant for ever* (*p*). They all knew whom he meant by his enemies; tho' he very often gives *Saul* his titles, *My Lord the King*, and *the Lord's Anointed*, yet there are times of ſpeaking out, and he now repreſents him as a perſon loſt to all impreſſions of ſhame, or pity, or juſtice. And ſuch language as this is what other good people uſe: thus, when *Abigail* meets *David*, ſhe is guilty of what ſome now have the profaneneſs to call *ſpeaking evil of dignities*; ſhe doth not lay a hard caſe under a parcel of ſoft and eaſy words, and tell him that it is an unhappineſs to be out of the royal favour, but ſtill there was no remedy for him beſide prayers and tears. No, that would have been *ſpeaking as one of the fooliſh women ſpeaketh*; but ſhe lays down a venerable and commanding truth, *The Lord will certainly make my Lord a ſure houſe, becauſe my Lord fights the battles of the Lord, and evil hath not been found in thee all thy days, yet a man is riſen to purſue thee, and to ſeek thy ſoul; but the ſoul of my Lord ſhall be bound up in the bundle of life with the Lord thy God, and the ſoul of thine enemies ſhall he ſling as out of the middle of a ſling* (*q*).

There is a decency that ought to be in our carriage, when we ſpeak to thoſe whom providence hath ſet over us. Thus doth *Paul* uſe the phraſe of *Moſt Noble Feſtus*, to one that had told him he was *mad*; but yet theſe civilities are never to raze out a principle that God hath put into every good man, that *in his eyes a vile perſon is contemned* (*r*). I believe the prophet *Eliſha* underſtood as much *non-reſiſtance* as ever was his duty; and yet you ſee how he both ſpeaks and does when an officer of the King was coming againſt

(*p*) 1 Sam. xxv. 12.
(*q*) 1 Sam. x. 28, 29.
(*r*) Pſalm xv. 4.

him; ſays he to the *Elders*, *See you how this ſon of a murderer hath ſent to take away my head? look, when the meſſenger comes, ſhut the door, and hold him faſt at the door; is not the ſound of his maſter's feet behind him (s)?* Thus *David* calls *Saul* his enemy, and placeth him in no other view; and I can ſcarce think that any one then would have the confidence to have ſaid that ſuch a man diſclaimed all imputation of *reſiſtance*. No, *they came to him to the hold*; they ſaw him at the head of an armed force; he makes no ſecret of the deſign, which he certainly would have done, if he thought it had been diſobedient to GOD, and ſcandalous to his people; he would never have ſpoke thus, *had it offended the generation of his children.*

2. He repreſents the juſtice of his cauſe; it was ſuch a one that he claims their concurrence to it; *If you be come peaceably to help me, my heart ſhall be knit unto you.* He doth not only deſire it as a favour to him, but what he might with reaſon expect from every *Iſraelite*, who underſtood the danger of his country, and the way to get out of it. It is a very ſmall matter *who* wears a crown; the world are but little concerned in the perſon; but it is the moſt extenſive caſe, that *he that rules over men be juſt, ruling in the fear of the Lord (t)*; ſuch a one is as *the light of the morning, as a morning without clouds, as the tender graſs ſpringing out of the earth by a clear ſhining after rain*; it is a bleſſing to live under them. But people ought to be guarded againſt a tyrant, *the ſons of Belial ſhould be all of them as thorns thruſt away, becauſe they cannot be taken with hands; but the man that ſhall touch them muſt be fenced with iron, and the ſtaff of a ſpear, and they ſhall be utterly burnt with fire in the ſame place (u)*; to change the latter of theſe for the former, was the caſe of their revolution.

It

(s) 2 Kings vi. 32.
(t) 2 Sam. xxiii. 4, 5.
(u) 2 Sam. xxiii. 6, 7.

It is this both *David* and they had in view; it run through all his projects, *When I ſhall receive the congregation, I will judge uprightly; the earth and all the inhabitants thereof are diſſolved, I bear up the pillars of it. I ſaid to the fools, deal not fooliſhly, and to the wicked, lift not up the horn (x): All the horns of the wicked I will cut off, but the horns of the righteous ſhall be exalted (y):* Thus did he *ſwear to the Lord, and vow to the God of Jacob.* You have his model of government, which muſt keep a court clean, and a kingdom eaſy, *I will behave myſelf wiſely in a perfect way; O when wilt thou come to me; I will walk within my houſe with a perfect heart: I will ſet no wicked thing before my eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aſide, it ſhall not cleave unto me; a froward heart ſhall depart from me, I will not know a wicked perſon; whoſo privily ſlanders his neighbour, him will I cut off; him that hath a high look and a proud heart, will I not ſuffer; mine eyes ſhall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me; he that walks in a perfect way, he ſhall ſerve me; he that works deceit, ſhall not dwell within my houſe; he that telleth lies, ſhall not tarry in my ſight; I will early deſtroy the wicked of the land, that I may cut off all wicked doers from the city of the Lord* (z). How quiet would nations be, if princes acted according to theſe rules?

Saul's adminiſtration was the reverſe to this; he had no opinion of any for their duty to God, or their faithfulneſs to the public; he loved a man that would humour his revenge rather than one that could inlarge his empire. Thus when the *Ziphites* came to him at *Gibeah*, and told him, Doth not *David hide himſelf with us in the ſtrong-holds? Thou therefore, O King, come down according to all the deſire of thy ſoul to come down, and our part ſhall be to deliver him into the King's hands* (a); he is more ſerious to their treachery than he

(x) Pſalm lxxv. 2, 3, 4, 5.
(y) Pſalm lxxv. 10.
(z) Pſalm ci.
(a) 1 Sam. xxiii. 19, 20.

he was to all *David*'s victories. You see by his answer what it is that gives a tyrant the chief raptures, and soonest leads him into his *te deums: Blessed be you of the Lord, for you have compassion on me; go, I pray you, prepare yet, and know and see his place where his haunt is, and who hath seen him, for it is told me he deals very subtilly; see therefore and take knowledge of all the lurking places where he hides himself, and come ye again to me with certainty, and I will go with you; and it shall come to pass, that if he be in the land, I will search him out through all the thousands of Judah* (*b*). This was the way to preferment then, to rail at the man whom God had honoured in so many battles: thus sweet and dear was revenge to the King, that he neglects all intelligence about the *Philistines*, if he can but get it about *David*; for as soon as he went upon this scandalous expedition, a messenger comes in all haste to tell him that the *Philistines had invaded the land* (*c*). It was time for the people to grow weary of such a one, and turn their thoughts another way; and from the bondage they were in, and the prospect they had of changing for the better, does *David* expect that though they were *Saul*'s kindred, they would be his friends, and *come peaceably to help him, that his heart might be knit unto them.*

3. He supposeth a case that he hopes they could not be guilty of, and that was, *betraying him into the hands of his enemies.* You know it was this suspicion among the *Philistine* lords, that made them insist upon it, that the king should send him away from their army; *for wherewith shall he reconcile himself to his master? Shall it not be with the heads of these men?* And how uneasy must he be in this struggle between his belief, that these were men that knew and pursued the public interest, and his fears that having been in a vile court, they might come upon ill designs? And therefore,

4. He

(*b*) 1 Sam. xxiii. 21, 22, 23. | (*c*) 1 Sam. xxiii. 27.

4. He aſſerts the innocence of his perſon, as well as the goodneſs of his deſign; *There is no wrong in my hand.* He could ſay that when he had a ſword in his hand drawn to give his ſovereign battle: he ſpeaks with a ſecurity in the cauſe itſelf, and could deſpiſe all thoſe that would call him rebel or traitor; though I do not know any ſo likely to do it as *Doeg the Edomite*, whoſe loyalty I have already given you an account of. This juſtice the Scripture hath done to the prieſthood of that age, to tell us that they were not tools of the court, or *rulers to the darkneſs* of the people; no, they have both the ſenſe to underſtand the welfare of *Iſrael*, and the bravery to puſh it. *Of the children of Levi four thouſand and ſix hundred, and Jehoiada was the leader of the Aaronites, and with him three thouſand and ſeven hundred; and Zadok a young man mighty of valour, and of his fathers houſe twenty-two captains* (*d*). It ſignifies very little what names thoſe people give to a cauſe, who never underſtood it: that need not break in upon the eaſineſs that a good man hath in himſelf; though *they that ſit in the gate ſhould ſpeak againſt him, and he become the ſong of the drunkards* (*e*). The two tribes and a half on the other ſide *Jordan* had the comfort of an appeal to heaven, at a time when they were miſunderſtood by their brethren; *The Lord God of gods, the Lord God of gods he knows, and Iſrael he ſhall know, that what we* do is not *in rebellion and tranſgreſſion againſt the Lord* (*f*).

David was ſo far from *a ſeared conſcience that is paſt feeling*, that *his heart ſmote him* when he *cut off the ſkirt of Saul's garment*; and yet now he hath no ſcruple to go out in battle, *to reſiſt unto blood, ſtriving againſt ſin.* Theſe men of *Judah* and *Benjamin* find him in arms, ſurrounded with his valiant *Gadites* who *ſeparated themſelves to him, men of might and men of war,*

(*d*) 1 Sam. xxiii. 26, 27, 28.
(*e*) Pſalm lxix. 12.
(*f*) Joſhua xxii. 22.

war, fit for the battle, that could handle ſhield and buckler, whoſe faces were like the faces of lions, and were ſwifter than roes upon the mountains. One of the leaſt captains of the hoſt was over a hundred, and the greateſt over a thouſand (*g*); they had already *put to flight them of the valleys to the eaſt and to the weſt* (*h*); and yet though he was going out againſt his King at the head of ſo great a force, he could ſay, *there is no wrong in my hands.*

5. If they were come to ſpoil ſo good a cauſe, he appeals to the vengeance of heaven, *The Lord God of our fathers look on it, and rebuke it:* obſerve, he doth not ſay the LORD, whoſe vicegerent *Saul* is, who anointed him, who gave you him for a King. Theſe were low conſiderations of Providence; for that is what he did *in his anger*; but he puts them in mind of that common intereſt that GOD had joined them all in, and how many ages this had continued by his care: he was *the God of their fathers.* He could ſee through all their diſguiſe; if they were only pretended friends, he would *look on it*; and though they might think it out of *David*'s power to prevent the treachery, yet he puts it into the hands of one who could *rebuke them*; and do you think that he had any ſcruple about the lawfulneſs of reſiſting *Saul*, when he calls down the great GOD to avenge him on thoſe that hinder it? Durſt he ſpeak in this manner of ſuch a crime as would *purchaſe to himſelf damnation?* And whoſe opinion ought to be of value with us, whether his, who makes the greateſt figure in the Old Teſtament, or ſome who are plainly enough deſcribed in the New? That they are *raging waves of the ſea, foaming out their own ſhame; wandring ſtars, who count it pleaſure to riot in the day-time; ſpots and blemiſhes, ſporting themſelves with their own deceivings* (*i*), *who are gone aſtray after the error of Balaam for reward,*

(*g*) Joſhua xxii. 8.
(*h*) Joſhua xxii. 14, 15.
(*i*) 2 Pet. ii. 13, 14.

reward, loving the ways of unrighteouſneſs, beguiling unſtable ſouls, ſpeaking great ſwelling words of vanity, who have mens perſons in admiration becauſe of advantage (*k*). In this you may ſum up the argument, that *David* now declareth himſelf in a ſtate of war with *Saul*. He invites theſe *Benjamites* into his cauſe; and, though he is in open arms againſt the LORD's anointed, yet he ſaith *there is no wrong in his hands:* nay, he repreſents their betraying him as a crime againſt heaven, and tells them *the God of their fathers would look on it, and rebuke it.*

II. After I have laid out *David*'s opinion of the cauſe he was in, I will not be very long upon thoſe Objections that we often hear of, though they each of them refer to what he ſaid on a ſudden, and ought not to be of the ſame value with this deliberate ſolemn action that we have in the text.

Object. 1. One is taken from his refuſal to let *Abiſhai* cut off *Saul*'s head; and his own heart ſmiting him when he took away but a part of his garment; and giving this as the reaſon, that none could *ſtretch out his hand againſt the Lord's anointed, and be guiltleſs:* but this doth not reach the caſe before us, upon ſeveral accounts.

1. All that was offered to him then was only the gratifying a perſonal revenge. *Behold the day is come which the Lord ſaid unto thee, I will deliver* THINE ENEMY *into thine hand, that thou mayſt do to him as it ſhall ſeem good to thee* (*l*). And thus it was the ſecond time, when *a deep ſleep fell upon them from the Lord, God hath delivered thine enemy into thine hand this day, let me ſmite him with the ſpear.* This *David* refuſed, he was of another opinion, and *Abiſhai* perhaps was a better ſoldier than a judge of prophecies; for the day was not come, in which *David* ſhould be delivered from his

(*k*) Jude 13—15. | (*l*) 1 Sam. xxiv. 4.

his enemy, he refers himſelf to a farther deciſion; *The Lord judge between me and thee, and the Lord avenge me of thee, but mine hand ſhall not be upon thee.* And thus he tells them, *The Lord ſhall ſmite him, or his day ſhall come to die, or he ſhall deſcend into the battle, and periſh*; as if he had made no ſcruple of doing it there.

2. It muſt have thrown the whole kingdom into the greateſt confuſion to have killed him at that time, becauſe the people were not come to underſtand their intereſt in *David*, as they did afterwards. *Saul* was then only chargeable with a private courſe of envy; the Scripture has left this credit upon his name, that though he was an ill man, yet for ſome years he had not the marks of a bad King: he was never guilty of betraying them to the enemy, under no influence from *Philiſtine* counſels, but kept up the bravery of his people; *He bad them teach the children of Judah the uſe of the bow. He clothed the daughters of Iſrael with ſcarlet and other delights, and put ornaments of gold upon their necks. From the blood of the ſlain, from the fat of the mighty, his ſword returned not empty* (*m*). But after his temper was ſoured, he run looſe into that which *deſtroys Kings*, and therefore there might be more reaſon for *David* to attack him now than there had been before.

3. He had particular obligations to wait till the promiſes of God to him ſhould take effect. At the time of his going down to *Saul* there were two things extraordinary; *Firſt*, The King and his armies being in a deep ſleep; and, *Secondly*, *David*'s knowing it at that diſtance: now, when he went to ſee a miracle, he would not allow himſelf in any common act of juſtice; he could eaſily argue, that the God who had cloſed the ſenſes, could extinguiſh the life of his enemy, and therefore leaves him in his hands.

4. In

(*m*) 2 Sam. i. 18, 22, 24.

4. In his ſpeeches to *Saul*, he intimates that his ſparing him is more than could have been expected, which he would not have done had he thought it ſo bad as ſome do. Is it any wonder that *David* ſhould not *purchaſe to himſelf damnation?* Nay *Saul* puts it upon no maxim of loyalty, does not tell him that he had done no more than what every ſubject was obliged to, but is rather ſurpriſed at it: *Thou art more righteous than I, for thou haſt rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil: Thou haſt ſhewn this day, how thou haſt dealt well with me, foraſmuch as when the Lord delivered me into thine hand, thou killedſt me not; if a man find his enemy, will he let him go well away* (*n*)*?*

5. The moſt that can ever be argued from this is, that *David* was of a different ſpirit from thoſe Monarchs, who encourage and hire aſſaſſinations. He hated to murder a man by proxy, whom he durſt not fight in perſon: he never ſtrove to be great by a wickedneſs in the cave, but by an appearance in the field.

6. It is plain he had all his thoughts turned upon a reconciliation to *Saul*, and therefore ventured to ſtay and talk with him; *It is my voice, my Father, my Lord and King. Wherefore heareſt thou mens words againſt thy ſervant, ſaying, David ſeeks thine hurt? See, for that I cut off the ſkirt of thy robe, and killed thee not, there is neither evil nor tranſgreſſion in my hand, and I have not ſinned againſt thee* (*o*); and again, *Wherefore does my Lord purſue after his ſervant, for what have I done, or what evil is in my hands* (*p*)*?* But now at laſt, *Saul* had almoſt *filled up the meaſure of his iniquity*; the people grew weary of his oppreſſions, and *David* could have no hopes of living eaſy with one who had hardned again after ſo many humiliations: and therefore he never ſcruples to receive thoſe that came

(*n*) 1 Sam. xxiv. 17—19.
(*o*) 1 Sam. xxiv. 9—11.
(*p*) 1 Sam. xxvi. 18.

came to him, as there did a *great company day by day, till it was an hoſt like the hoſt of God* (*q*).

Object. 2. Another objection is grounded on his lamentation over *Saul*'s death; it is not likely he would have *acted* what he ſo greatly *bewailed.* And he ordered the *Amalekite* to be ſlain for ſtretching out his hand againſt the LORD's anointed. And how was this conſiſtent with his own being in arms? I anſwer,

1. The fall of the army on mount *Gilboa*, and the triumph of the *Philiſtines* over *Saul*'s body, was *a reproach laid upon Iſrael*, and it was this he lamented: beſides he had there loſt his friend *Jonathan, whoſe love to him was greater than the love of women* (*r*); and the faſt that he and his army kept was upon a very public account; *They mourned and wept until even for Saul and for Jonathan his ſon, and for the people of the Lord, and for the houſe of Iſrael, becauſe they were fallen by the ſword* (*s*).

2. It is certain he preſſed with ſome vehemence to go out againſt *Saul* to battle, in the rear of *Achiſh*'s army; he aſſured him, *Thou ſhalt ſee this day what thy ſervant can do* (*t*): nay he took more troops under his command at that very time: *There fell ſome of Manaſſeh to David, when he went with the Philiſtines againſt Saul to battle* (*u*).

3. As for his ordering the *Amalekite* to be ſlain, it it does not in the leaſt affect this cauſe; he was one of that race whom GOD had commanded *Saul* to deſtroy; and it is likely there was ſome revenge in what the man did; it is certain he did it on purpoſe to make his court to *David: I have taken off the crown and the bracelets, and have brought them to my Lord* (*x*). He therefore conſiders him as an enemy to *Iſrael*, and not as a rebel againſt *Saul*; for in that ſenſe, the argument

(*q*) 1 Chron. xii. 22.
(*r*) 2 Sam. i. 26.
(*s*) 2 Sam. i. 12.
(*t*) 1 Sam. xxviii. 2.
(*u*) 1 Chron. xii. 19.
(*x*) 2 Sam. i. 10.

argument did not belong to him: *How waſt thou not afraid to ſtretch out thine hand againſt the Lord's anointed?* God had not anointed *Saul* for *his* Ruler; this *Amalekite* was not ſubject to him, and therefore *David* in condemning him, does but puniſh one of an accurſed nation, a known adverſary to his people, a thief and a murderer: and he ſhewed a true greatneſs of ſpirit, not to owe his throne to Heathens and Ruffians.

III. Having gone through *David*'s opinion of his cauſe, and taken off the force of thoſe objections that are raiſed againſt it, I go on to the anſwer that was made him by thoſe brave ſouls who came to join him. *Then the Spirit came upon Amaſai, who was the chief of the captains, and he ſaid, Thine are we, David, and on thy ſide, thou ſon of Jeſſe. Peace, peace be unto thee, and peace be to thine helpers; for thy God helpeth thee.* That the cauſe was as clear to them, as it had been to him, appears in every particular of this ſentence.

1. The man that ſpeaks for them is *Amaſai, the chief of the Captains.* There was no need to call it, as ſome have done a deſign of the like nature, an advancing the power of the mob: here is a man of the firſt rank, that takes upon him to deliver the public ſenſe of thoſe that were under his command; and do you think that he who lived in a court could be ignorant of loyalty? Doubtleſs there was no man in *Iſrael* that better underſtood how much obedience was owing to *Saul*, and what conſcience had to do with an unrighteous command.

I could not forbear this note, it hits ſo exactly to a circumſtance of our Revolution. Though we have a late ſpawn of writers, who repreſent that great work as only the rolling of a multitude; yet it is well known that perſons of the firſt quality invited the Prince of *Orange* over. The Paper called, *The Addreſs of the*

Engliſh Proteſtants, was ſigned by Dr *Sancroft*, Archbiſhop of *Canterbury*, and the greateſt part of that Order, which ſhewed *what ſpirit they were of* in the time of their danger; and it is of little value with me, that they who made no ſcruple to *pray* to a Prince, ſhould make any to *ſwear* to him. Our nobility and gentry all over the nation declared the right that was in them not to be undone, and flocked in to their Deliverer, in the manner that thoſe forces did to *David*. Nay that which gave the greateſt figure to the deſign was, that the preſent Queen and her late Conſort Prince *George* of *Denmark*, loved their Religion and Country above any ties of blood; her Majeſty began to be glorious at *Nottingham*, (as an earneſt what her name ſhould be in *Germany* and *Flanders*) by leading thoſe people as a General, which ſhe ſhould afterwards command as a Sovereign: ſhe then appeared in the beſt character of *Levi*, *who ſaid to his father and to his mother, I have not ſeen him, neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew his own children* (z). And though there are ſome who pleaſe themſelves with a phraſe of thanking GOD that they had no hand in it, yet we are met *this day* to thank our GOD that others had. *Our hearts are towards the Governors of Iſrael, who willingly offered themſelves among the people: praiſe ye the Lord* (a). And it is pity that they who hate the principles of this cauſe, ſhould roll in the profits. But there is ſomething greater may be ſaid of *Amaſai* than that he was *the chief of the Captains*; for,

2. *The Spirit came upon him.* I own, that a remarkable ſhare of wiſdom and courage ſhall go by this name in Scripture; and this is what we are to underſtand by GOD's *giving Saul another heart:* but there ſeems to be more deſigned by it here, becauſe he ſpeaks of *God's helping David*, and that *peace* would be

(z) Deut. xxxiii. 9. (a) Judg. v. 9.

be to the men who did ſo too. So that we are to take it for an uncommon impulſe, that ſhould both tell him what would be, and warm him to purſue it. It was a *Spirit of wiſdom and underſtanding, of counſel and might; and this comes from the Lord, who is excellent in counſel, and wonderful in working.* Now can we think that his Spirit would ſtamp a rebellion, or ſet his ſeal to that which is a damning ſin? Indeed a man that can call the operations of the Spirit *mechanical*, may call duty and ſin ſo too, and thus add nonſenſe to his blaſphemy; but they that know with what a reverence theſe things are ſpoke of in Scripture, will never doubt the lawfulneſs of a cauſe that is thus recommended; they will *conſider the work of God, that none can make that crooked that he has made ſtraight* (*b*).

3. He aſſures him of their union to him, in ſuch words as are laid down with the greateſt evidence and beauty: *Thine are we, David, and on thy ſide, thou ſon of Jeſſe*; which he would never have ſaid, if he thought there was any *wrong in his hands.* Theſe people do not only approve of his deſigns, but venture themſelves upon that bottom; though you know the hazard was no leſs than of their lives. He ſpeaks of *his heart being knit to them*; and they, in return, mingle thus with him; they profeſs themſelves to be his, with his perſon, and in his cauſe; his and theirs was to be a common danger.

4. He pronounces a bleſſing upon the deſign, and thoſe that were engaged in it: *Peace, peace be unto thee*, as the chief leader in this noble cauſe, *and peace be unto thine helpers.* This may be conſidered as a *wiſh*; they deſired he might have ſucceſs, which they durſt not have done under any ſcruple of its being lawful. Bidding *a man God-ſpeed* (*c*) that is procuring to himſelf damnation, is being *partaker of his evil deeds.* But beſides, this may be taken for a *prophecy*; they carried an aſſurance in them, that the deſign

(*b*) Eccleſ. vii. 13. (*c*) 2 John 10.

would do, and make its way through the fences of tyranny; and the reaſon they give for it comes in the laſt place,

5. *For thy God helpeth thee:* and how profane would it be to lay ſuch an aſſertion as this upon an unrighteous act? Would they dare to ſay that GOD *has fellowſhip with iniquity?* That he is confederate with rebels againſt his own anointed? No, but they knew, and ſo may every one elſe that reads the Bible with any care, that all government is for the good of thoſe that are under it; and not merely for the glitter and vanity of them that are in it: and therefore, when the greatneſs of ſingle perſons is founded on the ruin of communities, the primitive inſtitution is defeated; it is no longer of GOD, and ceaſes to have any buſineſs with conſcience. *David* and *Amaſai*, and all this *revolution-army*, knew well enough that a great deal of duty was owing to *Saul*, as the LORD's anointed; that whilſt he ruled according to law, the perſon that diſobeyed him, incurred a penalty; but they could diſtinguiſh, as we in the goſpel may better do, between *living to the luſts of men, and to the will of God* (*d*).

There were ſeveral of GOD's own inſtitutions that *David* broke in upon without being guilty; as, *his eating the ſhew-bread*; of which our SAVIOUR ſays *it was not lawful for him to eat it, nor thoſe that were with him, but only for the prieſts:* and yet he could tell *Ahimelech*, that *the bread was in a manner common, though it had been ſanctified that day in the veſſel* (*e*), which CHRIST puts upon nothing elſe, but *his being hungry*. So again, he took away the weapon that had been laid up before the LORD, behind the ephod, the *Sword of Goliath the Philiſtine* (*f*), which ſome would have the ignorance to call ſacrilege. But the reaſon was, he wanted theſe things; and mere ceremonial

(*d*) 1 Pet. iv. 1, 2.
(*e*) 1 Sam. xxi. 5.
(*f*) 1 Sam. xxi. 9.

monial laws, though they were of GOD's own making, give way to neceſſity. Thus, they knew that Kings were called *gods*, as well as we; and yet they could complain, *How long will ye judge unjuſtly, and accept the perſons of the wicked* (*g*)? Nay, perhaps they do not think them above the great execution of juſtice. *I have ſaid* (that is, the *Pſalmiſt* ſaid) *ye are gods, but ye ſhall die like men, and fall like one of the princes* (*h*). The title of *god*, as applied to a creature, is far from making it irreſiſtible; becauſe the devil is called the *god of this world*, and we are to *reſiſt him, being ſtedfaſt in our faith* (*i*).

(2.) There is another uſe of theſe words, and that is, not only to prove the cauſe of liberty, but explain the way, how it becomes glorious; and this may be for the encouragement of thoſe who are *waiting for the conſolation of Iſrael.* I would from the text obſerve to you,

1. That the intereſt of liberty may run very low for a long time, and have all its courſe under ground. The perſons that reſolve to offer it up in ſacrifice, may have *more than heart can wiſh*; *ſet their mouths againſt the heavens, and let their tongues go through the earth* (*k*): and ſuch as favour that righteous cauſe, *of whom the world is not worthy*, be treated as the *off-ſcouring of all things.* Thus it was with *David*; *Saul* fixed him in his envy, which put on all the forms of injuſtice; removing him from his command in the army, where his *name was much ſet by*, attempting to ſtab him, perſuading his wife to murder him, chaſing him at the head of great numbers; and this, after he had deſerved ſo well of the crown, *when he put his life in his hand, and ſlew the Philiſtine* (*l*).

It is a true obſervation, that *if a ruler hearken to*

(*g*) Pſalm lxxx. 1, 2.
(*h*) Pſalm lxxx. 6, 7.
(*i*) 1 Pet. v. 9.
(*k*) Pſalm lxxiii. 7, 9.
(*l*) 1 Sam. xix. 5.

lies, all his ſervants are wicked (*m*). Such a King would ſoon find men to his purpoſe. The *Ziphites* betray the poor exile that *hid himſelf in their woods. Nabal* denies him bread, though he had for ſome time guarded his flocks: but the moſt ungrateful part of all was, what the men of *Keilah* acted when he had ſaved them from the *Philiſtines*, who came to *rob their threſhing-floors*; yet GOD tells him thoſe ſordid creatures would *give him up* to *Saul.*

There is a great deal of reaſon why there ſhould be a ſeeming death upon the cauſe of GOD; it is to engage the more prayer and holineſs; to make people underſtand the common intereſt better than they would do, and to ſet off the deliverance, when it comes, that, as it is *the doing of the Lord, it may be marvelous in our eyes*; it is alſo to diſtinguiſh between thoſe whoſe zeal for the public is only to be private gainers by it, and ſuch as *prefer Jeruſalem above their chiefeſt joy*; and it may be to give ſinners room for *filling up the meaſure of their iniquities, that the wickedneſs of the wicked may come to an end, and* Providence *eſtabliſh the juſt* (*n*): for theſe and ſeveral other reaſons, may the cauſe of GOD and the liberties of his people be a long while embaraſſed: but,

2. You may farther obſerve *that the counſel of the Lord ſhall ſtand, and the purpoſe of his heart be eſtabliſhed. David* had ſome private encouragements which he lived upon, when it was dangerous for any to own him. *Abigail* tells him, *that God would build him a ſure houſe, becauſe he fought the battles of the Lord* (*o*). Nay, *Jonathan went into the wood, and ſtrengthens his hands in God*; *Thou*, ſays he, *ſhalt be King over Iſrael, and that Saul my father knows:* which was true enough; for he himſelf confeſſeth it: it is extorted from him, when he ſays, *Thou art righteous, my ſon David, for I have played the fool and erred exceedingly,*

(*m*) Prov. xxix. 12.
(*n*) Pſalm vii. 9.
(*o*) 1 Sam. xxiii. 16, 17.

ceedingly, and now I know that thou shalt be King, and the kingdom of Israel established in thine hand (*p*). *Saul*'s design was to set aside the succession that GOD appointed; he had forfeited for himself and all his posterity: *The kingdom was rent from him, and given to a neighbour who was better than he.* And yet he has the vanity to tell his son of an hereditary right, though at the same time he calls him the *Son of a perverse rebellious woman. Hast not thou*, says he, *chosen the son of Jesse to thine own confusion? For so long as he lives upon the ground, thou shalt not be established in thy kingdom* (*q*).

Indeed we may think, there was so little appearance of having things turn well, that it is a wonder *David* would ever attempt it. His army at first were as mean for quality as for number. *Every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him, and he became a captain over them, and there were with him about four hundred men* (*r*): and yet with this unlikely handful does he put himself into the way of the promise; for then he does not despair, but went *to the King of Moab* with this petition, *Let, I pray thee, my father and my mother be with you, till I know what God will do for me* (*s*). Thus he was kept in heart, till the *set time for God to favour him* came; and those persons are in the way of their duty, who do not give up a cause for all the bad symptoms that are upon it. *They know that judgment will return unto righteousness, and all the upright in heart will follow after it* (*t*).

3. That which looks so mean is to be glorious. Indeed *David* had the promise of a kingdom; we have nothing so very particular in our case: but, remember the covenant that is made with him, who

(*p*) 1 Sam. xxiv. 20.
(*q*) 1 Sam. xx. 30.
(*r*) 1 Sam. xxii. 2.
(*s*) 1 Sam. xxii. 5.
(*t*) Psalm xciv. 15.

is called the *root and offspring of David* (*u*): it is, that he ſhall be *head over all things unto his church* (*x*); that *his enemies are to bow before him, and lick the duſt*; *that none of them ſhall be able to keep alive his own ſoul, but a ſeed ſhall ſerve him, and ſuch as are accounted to the Lord for a generation* (*y*). In order to this, when *he takes to himſelf his great power and reigns, he will deſtroy them that deſtroy the earth* (*z*). Theſe are things we are ſure of; *the Lord has ſworn to him, and will not repent it, thou art a prieſt for ever* (*a*).

The great enemy of his intereſt is not an Heathen power, but ſomething that goes by his name, and is called Chriſtian. *Babylon, the mother of witchcrafts and abominations in the midſt of the earth* (*b*). And this is to come tumbling down from the laſt degrees of pride and ſtupidity. *How much ſhe has glorified herſelf and lived deliciouſly, ſo much torment and ſorrow give her, for ſhe has ſaid in her heart, I ſit a Queen and am no widow, and ſhall ſee no ſorrow; therefore ſhall her plagues come in one day, death and mourning and famine; ſhe ſhall utterly be burnt with fire, for ſtrong is the Lord God who judgeth her* (*c*). It is not for us to know *when the end of theſe things will be*; but happy is the perſon that *comes out of her, who is not partaker of her ſins*, and does not help her to be great, but rather *teſtifies* againſt her; ſuch an one ſhall *reſt in his lot at the end of the day* (*d*).

4. You may obſerve, in the laſt place, that when the Spirit of the LORD comes upon a people, it will give a glorious revival to the cauſe that ſeems to be loſt. By this I mean not only a religious temper, a holineſs of heart and life, but a wiſdom that will form deſigns, and a courage that will dare to follow them,

(*u*) Rev. xxii. 16.
(*x*) Eph. i. 22.
(*y*) Pſalm xxii. 29, 30.
(*z*) Rev. xi. 18.
(*a*) Pſalm cx. 4.
(*b*) Rev. xvii. 5.
(*c*) Rev. xvii. 7, 8.
(*d*) Dan. xii. 23.

them. This will at any time be able to retrieve what ſeems impoſſible in a common way. For,

1. It eſtabliſhes a union among the people who engage for this cauſe. Till men have their hearts extended beyond a private intereſt, they will not be honoured with *repairing our breaches and reſtoring paths to dwell in* (*e*). *David* had the happineſs of *Iſrael* in his view, which the army that joined him were conſcious to. It was this that *knit his heart* to them, and embodied them with him. *Thine are we, David, and on thy ſide, thou ſon of Jeſſe.* But how different is the language of the ten tribes to his grandſon? When his notions of empire are only to make himſelf great, and his people little; he loſes their hearts, as they had loſt his: *What portion have we in David, and what inheritance in the ſon of Jeſſe? Every man to his tents, O Iſrael. Now David, ſee to thine own houſe* (*f*).

The good of an uniting ſpirit is what they found at their *revolution.* It is ſaid of *Zebulun* that they were *not of a double heart* (*g*); and of the whole army, that theſe were *men of war, and could keep rank, and came with a perfect heart to Hebron to make David King over all Iſrael; and all the reſt of Iſrael were of one heart to make David King* (*h*). It has always been the artifice of enemies to work up private views and paſſions as high as they could, and daſh one good man againſt another. Thus they endeavour to weaken an intereſt, which when it is eſtabliſhed will cruſh them to powder. But when the ſpirit comes upon a people, they will ſee both the folly of their own animoſities, and the villainy of thoſe that prompted them. *Judah will no longer vex Ephraim, nor Ephraim envy Judah*, but they ſhall have the ſame zeal to unite, that they once had to differ.

2. Another

(*e*) Iſa. lviii. 12.
(*f*) 1 Kings xii. 16.
(*g*) 1 Chron. xii. 33.
(*h*) 1 Chron. xii. 38.

2. Another glory of this cauſe is, that it is carried on with a mighty ſenſe of GOD upon the hearts of men; of him as a Sovereign, and of him as a Friend. It is to this that *Amaſai* refers all his good wiſhes to *David*'s friends, and all his hopes in the deſign itſelf; *Peace, peace be unto thee, and peace be to thy helpers, for thy God helpeth thee.* Nor is there any thing that inſpires more courage into the hearts of people, than this belief that they are fighting the LORD's battles; and therefore he, for whoſe ſake they came into danger, is able to lead them through. All the other principles of war are of a lower ſort; the juſtice of a cauſe, the gains of a conqueſt, may have a great influence upon thoſe that look no farther than themſelves; but to think of an Omnipotence that is confederate with you, leads up the meditation to ſomething above. There is no perſon ſo equal to the hazards of a battle, as one that has *good hope through grace* that all is ſecure for his ſoul on the other ſide; that to fall is to die but once, and then to live for ever. And beſides, ſuch people are acted by a faith that *out of weakneſs can make ſtrong, and has turned to flight the armies of the Aliens* (*i*): and no wonder when they correſpond with *the God of the ſpirits of all fleſh*, with him who has the ſtores of nature as well as grace; it makes them go into the field with a divinity in their reſolutions; they *bathe their ſwords in heaven* (*k*), as GOD himſelf ſays he would do; it takes a celeſtial edge: they are *helping the Lord againſt the mighty* (*l*); one who has claimed ſuch a concern in the war, as to call himſelf the GOD of the armies of *Iſrael*.

And it is this that we now want; we have too long truſted in an arm of fleſh, and had our reliance upon nothing greater than the courage and wiſdom of men. GOD has ſhewn us the vanity of all this, by denying his

(*i*) Heb. xi. 34.
(*k*) Iſa. xxxiv. 5.
(*l*) Jud. v. 23.

his bleſſing to the beſt counſels, and nobleſt attempts; and by ſuffering little dirty factions to confound the moſt honourable ſchemes that ever were laid: he has let us ſee that all our deſigns can only ſucceed by his Providence; and when it pleaſes him, who *has the reſidue of the Spirit*, to give it ſuch a diffuſion amongſt us, that people ſhall flow to their duty, be tender of his honour, not dare to profane his name, or neglect his worſhip; when he ſhews them the way to their ſenſes, and the value of their ſouls, it will ſoon give ſuch a turn, that *the righteous ſhall ſee it, and rejoice, and iniquity for ever ſtop her mouth* (*m*). The *Jews* complained, that their preparations, nay, their very ſucceſſes came to nothing. *We have been with child, we have been in pain, we have as it were brought forth wind, we have not wrought any deliverance in the earth, neither have the inhabitants of the world fallen* (*n*). But this cauſe was to be fetched out of its grave, and therefore he ſpeaks of it in the terms of a reſurrection: *Thy dead men ſhall live, together with my dead body ſhall they ariſe; awake and ſing, ye that dwell in the duſt; thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth ſhall caſt out her dead* (*o*).

If you aſk what we can pretend to, as a parallel to this that *Amaſai* ſaid, *Thy God helps thee?* Upon what cauſe and people can we lay ſo great a promiſe? I muſt only anſwer in the general, and leave you to fit the deſcriptions.

The intereſt that he maintains, always takes into it a political equity; *He ſits in the throne judging right* (*p*). He will avenge any want of integrity in any public leagues and covenants. *David* was ſo ſenſible of this, that had he been guilty, it would have made him deſpair of mercy. *If I have rewarded evil to him that was at peace with me, let the enemy perſecute my ſoul and take it; let him tread down my life upon the earth,*

(*m*) Pſalm cvii. 43.
(*n*) Iſai. xxvi. 18.
(*o*) Iſa. xxvi. 19.
(*p*) Pſalm ix. 9.

earth, and lay mine honour in the duſt (*q*). A national truth is ſo great a duty in the ſight of GOD, that you ſee how he deals with the King of *Judah* for his violation of it, though it was to one that had conquered him. *He ſent his ambaſſadors to Egypt, that he might give him horſes and much people; ſhall he proſper, ſhall he eſcape that does ſuch things? Or ſhall he break the covenant, and be delivered? Seeing he has deſpiſed the oath, by breaking the covenant, when lo he had given his hand, and had done all theſe things, he ſhall not eſcape* (*r*). It fell heavy upon *Jehoſhaphat*, that he had *helped the ungodly, and joined with them that hated the Lord* (*s*).

Again, the cauſe of GOD muſt be that of Religion; by which I mean, not what man would make it, but what CHRIST has left it, *The faith that was once delivered to the ſaints* (*t*): and therefore, any agreements that *give power to the beaſt and the falſe prophet*, and make it harder with diſtreſſed Proteſtants, cannot be his. He blames thoſe in *Iſrael* who *daub with untempered morter; to wit, the prophets, that ſaw viſions of peace for Jeruſalem, and there was no peace* (*u*); *with their lies they had made the heart of the righteous ſad, whom he would not have made ſad, and ſtrengthned the hands of the wicked, that he ſhould not return from his wicked way, by promiſing him life* (*x*). But when there are any who *ſeek the peace of Jeruſalem, for their brethren and companions ſake, and for the houſe of the Lord our God* (*y*); when their prayers, their wiſhes, their zeal include the rights of nations, and the quiet of conſcience, the liberty we have as men, and the religion we ſhould have as Chriſtians; *Peace* be to ſuch helpers, for our GOD will help them.

3. You

(*q*) Pſalm vii. 4, 5.
(*r*) Ezek. xvii. 15.
(*s*) 2 Chron. xix. 2.
(*t*) Jude 3.
(*u*) Ezek. xiii. 15, 16.
(*x*) Ezek. xiii. 22.
(*y*) Pſalm cxxii. 8, 9.

3. You obſerve theſe men were immediately advanced; *Then David received them, and made them captains of the band.* He wanted no other recommendation of them, than what appeared in this noble anſwer, that they were firm to *the God of their fathers*, and to the cauſe he now eſpouſed: and that nation, one would think, was in love with ſhackles, that will deny itſelf the help of thoſe that are every way capable, or throw any teſt or bar upon the public ſafety.

4. When the cauſe is ſo filled with zeal, and ſpirited from above, it will make its way through all *the wrath of man.* I do not queſtion but *Doeg* the *Edomite* was in full favour after ſo much falſhood and blood. Though every one believed him a ſinner, yet few would have the courage to tell him ſo. But what would become of him, in the grand revolt of the tribes? Hiſtory indeed is ſilent upon this head, but prophecy is not; and we may ſuppoſe what *David* foreſaw came all true: he writ the lii[d] Pſalm, when *Doeg* came to *Saul*, and there he ſcores out his fate; *God ſhall deſtroy thee for ever; he ſhall take thee away, and pluck thee out of thy dwelling-place, and root thee out of the land of the living. The righteous ſhall ſee and fear, and ſhall laugh at him; lo, this is the man that made not God his ſtrength, but truſted in the abundance of his riches, and ſtrengthened himſelf in his wickedneſs* (z). *Amaſai* and the reſt of theſe mighty men promiſed themſelves a peace by helping *David* againſt the perſons who had entangled the public affairs. And a neglect of thoſe executions that were owing to an injured people, entailed a famine upon the kingdom three years: this was *for Saul and his bloody houſe, becauſe he had ſlain the Gibeonites* (a); nor was the anger of the LORD to be turned away, till *ſeven of his ſons were hanged up in Gibeah* (b).

The

(z) Pſalm lii. 5, 6, 7.
(a) 2 Sam. xxi. 1.
(b) 2 Sam. xxi. 6.

The ſchemes of wickedneſs are unraveled at once when this ſpirit comes upon a people; and ſuch an overthrow of tyranny do we commemorate this day. Some of you can remember the popular fears that ran through the nation in a late reign; and there was ground enough for them, when a lewd prieſt ſat in the council; when judges told you from the bench, that your laws were their King's, and preachers from the pulpit, that our lives were his; and *Iriſh* dragoons were ready to make application of that doctrine. But GOD, in mercy to *Great-Britain*, ſuffered the King to periſh by his own devices, who had got nothing but the fumes of Popery in his head, and the ſpirit of it in his heart: in a little time he brought himſelf to the caſe of that prince of whom we read: *The women of the houſe ſhall ſay, Thy friends have ſet thee on, and prevailed againſt thee; thy feet are ſunk in the mire, and they are turned away back* (*c*). It pleaſed a wiſe and gracious Providence to raiſe us up *a deliverer, and a great one*, whom the people met with Hoſanna's, *bleſſing him that came to ſave them in the name of the Lord.* To this happy turn we owe the preſent government, and the ſucceſſion of a family to theſe crowns, which gives us hopes for the ages that come after us. Let a cauſe ſo good keep us zealous and ſteady to it in all its branches. *Peace, peace* be to the deſign, and *Peace be to its helpers, for our God will help them.*

(*c*) Jer. xxxviii. 22.

SERMON

SERMON XV.

The true Happineſs of a good Government.

Preached NOVEMBER 5, 1714.

PSALM LXIII. 11.

The King ſhall rejoice in God, every one that ſweareth by him ſhall glory; but the mouth of them that ſpeak lies, ſhall be ſtopped.

YOU will learn by the title of this Pſalm that *David* wrote it *when he was in the wilderneſs of Judah*; a place of continual danger and ſorrow to him: there did *Saul* hunt him as a *partridge upon the mountains:* there did the *Ziphites* diſcover his abode, and, from a villainous principle that ſome call Loyalty, would have betrayed him to the ravage of a greedy court: there did *Nabal* deny him bread, when his army was juſt a ſtarving, and all the while he continued in that *barren and dry land* he wanted the *ſanctuary* of GOD, which lay heavier upon him than all his other afflictions: and yet, though he ſeems to be laid aſide from devotion and property too, *driven out from abiding in the inheritance of the Lord*, and at the ſame time expoſed in his perſon; yet in this Pſalm he opens ſuch a confidence, as if his life had been ſecure, and his Religion unmoleſted: which lets us ſee how well it is with

with that soul, who hath faith in a promise; such a one cannot only hope for a turn that his affairs will take, but the Word of God hath with him both the sweetness and the credit of the thing that he is waiting for. He goes faster than Providence leads him, and can taste the mercy before it comes. He takes it for granted that it will be, and he behaves himself with that presence of joy as if he really had it. Of this advantage is the grace of God; it doth not only prepare us for a blessing, but brightens all the darkness we are under till it comes. Though *David* was driven out both from the sanctuary and court, yet he speaks as if he wanted none of the true benefits that might have been had in either. For,

First, The work of Religion in his soul went on. He gives out a large experience both of his desires towards God, and the returns that were made from him. Though he could not see the divine *power and glory* as he had done, yet his meditation run out upon *a loving-kindness that was better than life. His soul was satisfied as with marrow and fatness. His mouth could then praise God with joyful lips. He remembred him in the night. He followed hard after him, and was upheld by his right hand* (*a*); so that whatever enemies were able to do, as heaven itself was sure, the passage to it was open.

Secondly, He speaks with the same persuasion of his temporal concerns; not only what related to him as a Saint, but what he must come to as a Sovereign. He knew that the malice of men could neither cheat him of a treasure in heaven, nor of a crown in *Israel*; and therefore, at a time when they seemed to have their full scope against him, he could look to the end of that noise and rage. *They that seek my soul to destroy it, shall go into the lower parts of the earth; they shall fall by the sword, and be a portion for foxes: but the King shall rejoice in God, every one that sweareth by him*

(*a*) Psal. lxiii. 2, 3, 5, 6, 8.

him ſhall glory; but the mouth of them that ſpeak lies ſhall be ſtopped (*b*). He is very particular you ſee in deſcribing the various methods of vengeance that the juſtice of GOD and man ſhall follow them with: which I will not conſider now, but place them under that part of my text where they will beſt come in.

Theſe words give us the true glories of a right Government in all its branches.

I. Here is a clear and eaſy happineſs to the Ruler: *The King ſhall rejoice in God.*

II. Here is ſecurity and honour to the beſt of ſubjects, *Every one that ſwears by him ſhall glory.* And,

III. Here is that which is of abſolute neceſſity to the other two: a righteous juſtice upon all thoſe that are enemies to the Conſtitution; *The mouth of them that ſpeak lies, ſhall be ſtopped.*

Theſe are the parts of the text, and theſe the heads of that method that I ſhall obſerve in a diſcourſe upon it. I cannot promiſe myſelf time enough to make a diſtinct application of what you may hear, or to ſhew you what a reſemblance there is betwixt our concerns and *David*'s; but ſhall endeavour to lead you into thoſe reflections as I go along, weaving our ſtory into his.

I. I begin with that happineſs and glory of a right Government which relates to the perſon of the Ruler: *The King ſhall rejoice in God.* You will here conſider,

1*ſt*, Who it is that he means by *the King*; and,

2*d*, What is ſignified by his *rejoicing in God.*

1. Though he hath given us only the office and not the name of the perſon he ſpoke of, yet it is eaſy enough to ſuppoſe who it is that he calls the King. Not *Saul* or any of his royal line, but *David* himſelf.

(*b*) Pſal. lxiii. 9—11.

That which makes the expreſſion a little difficult is, why he ſhould take the *title* before he got the *throne*. If this Pſalm was given out in the days when he penned it; if he ſuffered it to go abroad for the comfort and eſtabliſhment of thoſe who had *ſet their hope in God*, and *favoured his righteous cauſe*, it would lay him open to more danger. They that were againſt the ſucceſſion would inflame the difference betwixt the court and him. If it raiſed the envy of *Saul* to hear him commended as a General, it muſt puſh him a great deal farther into the quarrel, to read a Pſalm where he calls himſelf a King. There is no doubt of it, but this divine compoſure would at that time be repreſented as *a ſeditious paper*, and it is not the only inſtance where the Spirit of GOD hath been thought to ſpeak treaſon.

But theſe are poor and little things with a ſoul that lives in heaven. *David*, whoſe mind had locked itſelf in the promiſe and power of GOD, was not to have his joys intangled by forms of ſpeech. He that had told him of a throne, taught him how to ſpeak of it beforehand: he had the phraſe where he had the title. GOD had *rejected Saul from being King over Iſrael*, and had given the Government to *David*; and though this happened ſeveral years before the change was brought about; yet it is a glory belonging to the divine nature, to *call things which are not as though they were* (*c*): and it is an argument of this good man's faith that he hath no diffidence of the great event, though his caſe was ſo unhappy now; when he is hiding or flying from the force of an army; when he is begging for bread whilſt he lived in that looſe and dangerous way, the promiſe could lead his eyes through all the gloom of life to an eſcape, to a throne, to an empire. *I had fainted, unleſs I had believed to ſee the goodneſs of the Lord in the land of the living* (*d*).

He

(*c*) Rom. iv. 17. (*d*) Pſal. xxvii. 13.

He could not mean *Saul*, when he said, *The King shall rejoice in the Lord*; that was far from being true of him; a man hurried and plagued with *an evil spirit*, whose envy eat out his peace, and destroyed the very form of Religion; who lived in an open neglect of worship, in a plain defiance of God, and a professed cruelty to his people; such a one must be uncapable of the joy here spoken of. Nor had he any prospects of happiness for *Saul:* he rather expected his ruin, as he saith, at the time that he spared him, *The Lord avenge me of thee*; and, *the day shall come when he shall go down to the battle and die.* He knew that *God had rent the kingdom from him*; and as *the strength of Israel could not repent* (*e*), so he would not be baffled. The same perfections that made it impossible that a change should come from himself, were an assurance that it should never be brought on by the power of another. He saw that God only held off his vengeance from that wretched Monarch, till he had *filled up his iniquity*; but as to *joy in the Lord*, he had *no lot or portion in that matter*, being plainly in *the gall of bitterness, and the bond of iniquity.*

You may judge by this, how widely those people talk from the language of Scripture, who tell us of sacred *persons* and *titles*; as if the one might not be *touched*, nor the other *assumed.* It is true, *Saul* is spared, because *he was the Lord's anointed*; but you must not suppose that this signifies no more than the vial of oil poured upon his head, and that this makes his dignity indefeasible, because at that time *David* was as much anointed as he; and therefore it is plain, either that this ceremony of itself did not give the claim; or if it did, that there might be a forfeiture. Or thirdly, that it was possible two persons might have it at the same time. Now the last opinion is what all sides reckon foolish, and therefore the former must be true. If the oil made the King, *David*

(*e*) 1 Sam. xxiv. 12.—xxvi. 10.—xv. 28, 29.

was ſo a long while before he wore the crown; but it is plain from his caſe, that it did not make the claim immediate, as it is evident from *Saul*'s, that it did not make it unalienable. It will farther appear who is the King that he here ſpeaks of, from the ſecond thing to be obſerved: And that is,

2. The happy ſtate of mind he ſhould be in: *The King ſhall rejoice in the Lord.* Where you have,

Firſt, The affection that he would uſe, and that is joy.

Secondly, The object upon which it muſt be employed, and that is the LORD.

1. As to the temper or paſſion of the ſoul by which he is diſtinguiſhed, it is the nobleſt that our nature can feel. Every one carries along with him in his notions of a King, an opinion that he is great to others, but it does not always happen that he is eaſy to himſelf. Empire and joy may lie far aſunder. The cares that hang about a throne leave very little room for this affection. Rejoicing in the LORD includes a great deal more than a ſucceſs in what he was aiming at. It is poſſible he might be a King to his people, and a ſlave to himſelf: but the bleſſing deſigned in my text takes into it an eaſineſs in the manner of his coming to the Government, and a chearful ſpirit that run through all the adminiſtration. That GOD would bow the hearts of the people to him, and make him their darling before he was their Sovereign. That there ſhould be a general ſubmiſſion either to the clemency of his ſceptre, or to the reach of his ſword. This affluence of the tribes; this thorough diſperſion of thoſe that ſet up for him who was the Pretender then, is what *David* admires in the XVIIIth Pſalm. That was written, as he telleth us in the title to it, *When the Lord had delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul:* and the way how he came by this, was puſhing home in ſeveral battles. *I purſued mine enemies and overtook them: neither did I turn again till*

till they were consumed. I have wounded them that they were not able to rise. They are fallen under my feet, for thou hast girded me with strength to the battle, thou hast subdued those under me that rose up against me (*f*). He understood no compositions with them. They acted then upon the principle of hereditary right, to support the pretensions of the late King's son, but as he knew that foolish notion was like to embroil the public, so he improved the blessing that followed his arms. *Thou hast given me the necks of mine enemies, that I might destroy them that hate me; then did I beat them as small as dust before the wind, I did cast them out as dirt in the streets: Thou hast delivered me from the strivings of the people* (*g*). You see by this the method in which he proceeded; but it will lead you farther into the nature and dignity of this joy, if you consider,

2*dly*, The object upon whom he placed it, *The King shall rejoice in the Lord.* There are many things that might be comprehended here, but I will keep myself within these four; that when *David*'s joy was fixed upon God he must have,

1. Hopes of his own eternal salvation.
2. A sense of that divine hand that raised him to the throne.
3. A knowledge of those rules that he was to govern by, and,
4. A regard to that end that he ought to aim at.

1. *He that rejoiceth in the Lord* must have his hopes extended to the salvation of another world. The glories of an empire are but short and low for an immortal soul to take up with: no *portion* is great enough that comes within *this life.* Though what he supposeth in the case of the wicked was desirable, *That God had filled their belly with hid treasures: they were full of children, and the rest of their substance they left to their babes*; yet as for himself he was looking a

(*f*) Psal. lxiii. 37—39. (*g*) Psal. lxiii. 40, 42, 43.

great deal higher. *I will behold thy face in righteouſneſs; I ſhall be ſatisfied when I awake with thy likeneſs* (*b*). How ſoon is a King to be tumbled from his throne, and ſent without any guards or greatneſs to the bar of a righteous GOD? And what a poor ſatisfaction does that man give himſelf who is pleaſed with a crown here, though he hath no hopes of one that *fades not away?* What was there in all the pomp of a court to balance the diſtreſs of mind that *Saul* fell under, when he begged a favour of a *witch*, and trembled before a *ſpectre*, and gave this as the ſad reaſon of his doing ſo, *The Philiſtines are upon me; and God is departed from me* (*i*)? What a wretched ſtate muſt a dying Monarch be in, who is hurried away from the glory of a palace and the flattery of ſervants, and in a few moments hears no voice, but that of an angry GOD and howling Devils? But he that *rejoiceth in the Lord*, in the way that *David* did, leaves a throne to an advantage: he dies to be ſtill greater. Though it is like to be no better with him than other believers, yet his remove is into a brighter manſion, and into purer company, where they are all *Kings and Prieſts unto God and our Father* (*k*).

2. I own that *David* in his joy came down into a lower occaſion. He did it not only as a Saint, but as a King. He rejoiced in the LORD, as the author of his advancement; thus he ſaith in another Pſalm, *The King ſhall joy in thy ſtrength, O Lord, and in thy ſalvation how greatly ſhall he rejoice? For thou haſt made him moſt bleſſed for ever. Thou haſt made him exceeding glad with thy countenance, for the King truſteth in the Lord, and through the mercy of the moſt High he ſhall never be moved* (*l*). He had the firſt promiſe from GOD, who *took him from following the ſheep great with young, that he might feed Iſrael his people* (*m*). There

(*b*) Pſal. xvii. 14, 15.
(*i*) 1 Sam. xxii. 15.
(*k*) Rev. i. 6.
(*l*) Pſal. xxi. 1, 6, 7.
(*m*) Pſal. xxviii. 71, 72.

There was a divine circle around him in all his dangers, between pouring the oil on his head and putting the ſceptre into his hand. *His wandrings* were numbred and guarded from above. He had great examples of a Providence within that time, and *could remember God from the land of Jordan, and from the Hermonites, and from the hill Miſar* (*n*). The narrow eſcapes he had from his enemy are what he puts into the ſongs of praiſe, and after the tireſome years that he ſpent this way, *the Lord bowed the heavens and came down. He ſent from above and took him. Thou haſt given me the ſhield of thy ſalvation, thy right hand hath holden me up, thy gentleneſs hath made me great; the Lord liveth, and bleſſed be my rock, and let the God of my ſalvation be exalted* (*o*). *It is God that avengeth me, and ſubdueth the people under me: Great deliverance giveth he to the King, and ſheweth mercy to his anointed, to David, and to his ſeed for evermore* (*p*).

It is true in that Pſalm he ſpeaks of God's *ſending out his arrows to ſcatter them, and his lightnings to diſcomfit them*; but you are not to underſtand it as if the Revolution was produced only in a miraculous way: as if there was no conſent of the tribes, and no reſiſtance to the enemy: ſo far from that, that his army had a daily increaſe till it became *like the hoſt of God* (*q*): but however he owns that it was a divine bleſſing that gave the people, firſt, an inclination to chooſe him, and ſecondly, a courage to defend him. They wiſhed for a fair opportunity in *Saul*'s time to change their King, and ſome deſigns were laid to bring it about then, as *Abner* reminds them. *He had communication with the Elders of Iſrael, ſaying, Ye ſought for David in time paſt to be King over you, now then do it* (*r*). But as it is *the hand of the Lord that turns the hearts of men like*

(*n*) Pſal. xlii. 6.
(*o*) Pſal. xviii. 1, 9, 6.
(*p*) Pſal. xviii. 46, 47, 50.
(*q*) 1 Chron. xii. 22.
(*r*) 2 Sam. iii. 17.

the rivers of water, ſo the King rejoiceth in him as the author of this mercy.

3. This joy in the LORD muſt comprehend in it both a knowledge and approbation of thoſe directions that GOD had given him to govern by. *He that ruleth over men muſt be juſt, ruling in the fear of the Lord* (*s*). Greatneſs is nothing elſe but a capacity of doing good, and therefore when this does not meet with a right inclination; it makes a man more like the Devil, who is *the god of this world*, not to ſave it, or to do any divine offices of love and bounty, but to fill it with ſin and miſery. And ſo he is *the prince of the power of the air*; not to clear the ſky, or fan the earth, but for a profuſion of thunder and vengeance. His empire is for nothing elſe but ruin to thoſe that are under it. And can a greatneſs like his produce any joy in the LORD? No, it is with a hatred of him, and an enmity to the juſtice and goodneſs of his nature that theſe people live. Can a man delight in blood, drive his ſubjects into corners, break them upon the wheel, let them groan in gallies, and rot in dungeons, and yet *rejoice in the Lord?*

Indeed how far the conſcience of a perſecutor may be at the command of his luſt, I cannot tell: eſpecially ſince I have read of one King in *Spain* who in his laſt will recommends himſelf to the Virgin *Mary* from his zeal to promote the Inquiſition. But certainly the Holy Spirit never meant that ſhe ſhould be the Patroneſs of cruelty, when we read that *all generations ſhall call her Bleſſed:* no, ſuch a doctrine as that had better be traced from its parent *Cain*, who was of that *evil one and ſlew his brother*, than the mother of JESUS, who came *not to deſtroy mens lives, but to ſave them* (*t*).

4. This *rejoicing in the Lord* takes into it a regard to the divine glory as the end of all his Government. It

(*s*) 2 Sam. xxiii. 2, 3. | (*t*) 1 John iii. 12.

It is the way to debaſe our thoughts both of God himſelf and the King that he ſets up, if we ſuppoſe that he does it only to diſtinguiſh one man from another. Does he take delight in the vanities of a court? Is it ſo worthy of him to make one perſon great, and a whole community miſerable? *Hath he eyes of fleſh, or ſeeth he as man ſeeth?* When he *pulls down one and ſets up another*, is that all that he means by it, that Providence ſhall pay its compliment to this as a King, and pour thunder upon a whole nation that are to be his ſubjects? No, *that be far from him.* He loved *David* and gave him a throne, but the reaſon why he *eſtabliſhed it, was for his people Iſrael's ſake* (*u*). It is but a very little thing with him who *accepts not the perſons of Princes* (*x*), how great they are, but how good they will be, and therefore he that *rejoiceth in the Lord* muſt have an honeſt view to the divine glory.

And how can this be, when the worſhip of God is polluted, and his people oppreſſed? He ſuppoſeth ſuch uſage of them to be a ſlur upon himſelf. *They that take them captive make them howl, and my name continually every day is blaſphemed* (*y*). It is but a wretched uſe of Government, if a man can only ſay that he hath made great additions to it, and perhaps done it by fraud, cruelty and force. Is this acting to the glory of God? Nay, is it not rather an avowance of Atheiſm, that ſuch a one lives as *without God in the world?* And what joy can thoſe Monarchs have in the Lord, who will ſoon fetch them to his bar, that have advanced themſelves with a ruin to his intereſt, and have made tenderneſs for his worſhip high-treaſon againſt their crowns? It is eaſy turning the argument as a wicked heart would have it, when they have Divinity and Law of their own chooſing; but ſhall theſe authorities be of any weight with Him, *Who fruſtrateth the tokens of liars, and makes diviners mad*; *who*

(*u*) 2 Sam. v. 12.
(*x*) Job xxxiv. 19.
(*y*) Iſai. lii. 5.

who turneth wiſe men backwards, and maketh their counſel fooliſh (z)? Whatever maxims they are guided by I know not, but I will refer you to one that they muſt be judged by. *To cruſh under his feet all the priſoners of the earth, to turn aſide the right of a man before the face of the moſt High, to ſubvert a man in his cauſe, the Lord approveth not* (a). He that indeed *rejoiceth in the Lord*, puts his whole affairs into better meaſures, as you will ſee from the other parts of my text, to which I proceed.

II. You find there is not only a true happineſs for the Prince, but ſecurity and honour to the beſt of his ſubjects; *every one that ſwears by him*, that is, by the ſame God in whom the King rejoices, every ſuch perſon *ſhall glory*. I ſhall here conſider,

1*ſt*, The deſcription we have of this people; *they ſwear by the Lord*.

2*d*, The benefit deſigned for them; *they ſhall glory*. And,

3*d*, The extent of this favour: it reaches as far as the character, to the whole body of thoſe that ſwear by the Lord, *every one of them ſhall glory*.

1. The people who may have hopes of this bleſſing, are deſcribed by one ſolemn part of their Religion, that *they ſwear by the Lord*. Surely none can be ſo groſs as to think theſe words are capable of an application either to falſe or profane ſwearing. They that make uſe of this dreadful name in oppoſition to truth, have no ſhare in this *glory*, but muſt look for their dividend in the latter part of my text, *The mouth of them that ſpeak lies ſhall be ſtopped*. Nor can that perſon think himſelf within the deſign of this promiſe, who *takes the name of the Lord his God in vain*. That ſort of ſwearing is upon ſome accounts viler than downright Atheiſm; for I could rather deny a God than

(z) Iſai. xliv. 25. (a) Lam. iii. 34—36.

than ridicule him. If there is such a Being, if he is my Creator and my Judge, he will never be my jest. He has not given me his awful name to lard a common sentence, or heighten it with a little more sound. This is a practice so vile and daring, that whilst it continues a national sin, it both sinks the glory of a people, and puts an ill presage upon the face of public mercies.

Is it likely that those persons should be either the patrons or the professors of Liberty, who suffer their tongues, upon all occasions, to be tipped with hell and blasphemy? They may glory indeed, but it is *in their shame.* God sometimes uses them to serve an interest which they can never honour; but it leaves a worse countenance upon our national blessings; it does not make them look so well and lively as we would have them, when they are in the hands of those who live with an open contempt of the God that gives them. So that this cannot be the meaning of the words. But I take their swearing by the Lord to signify three things. It may be understood of,

1. Their Allegiance.
2. Their Religion. Or,
3. Their Troubles.

1. Perhaps their swearing by the Lord may include that allegiance they paid to the King. The assurance they gave him of homage and duty, was laid upon a divine ground. They did it in a sacred name;

1. With an appeal to God as the witness of their integrity.

2. With a regard to his interest, as the rule of their subjection.

1st, Swearing by the Lord, as it comes into the case of a peoples homage, is an appeal to him for the truth of what they pretend to. And this is so great a solemnity, that it is pity there should be any thing to take off from the minds of men the reverence with which

which they ought to do it. For, it is as far as we can go in aſſuring one another of our integrity. *An oath among men is for confirmation, and an end of all ſtrife* (*b*): and therefore thoſe people muſt have ſunk their apprehenſions of a divine Majeſty, and a future reckoning, who will dare to ſwear falſly. It is a great deal more than deceiving man; it is a challenge given to the perfections of God; a telling him that either he does not ſee the fraud, or that he cannot avenge it.

There is in every oath a double ſolemnity; *Firſt*, it is laying one truth in *pawn* for another; we give in ſomething that is undoubted in teſtimony of ſomething that is now in diſpute. That as ſurely as I believe a God, and take his word to be true, ſo what I now ſay is agreeable to it. That I would no more be a deceiver in this affair, than I would be an infidel. But beſides this, there is another part in an oath; and that is, *Secondly*, an *imprecation*; that upon the falſhood of what I am now profeſſing, I diſclaim all the mercies promiſed in the book of God, and challenge upon my ſoul and body every curſe that is recorded there. If what I ſay be not true and juſt, I quit heaven for hell; give up all my hopes of the former, and avow my right to the latter.

There is no leſs than this in the homage of a ſubject to his prince. He has called in God as a witneſs, he ſtands open to him as a judge. And would any perſon dare to do this with *lying lips*, who knows the ſolemnity of *Swearing by the Lord? Keep the King's commandment, and that with regard to the oath of God* (*c*). What muſt that man have been, who, for any ſecular advantage would have given his oath to *David*, and, at the ſame time, believed an hereditary right in *Iſhboſheth?* Is it not dreadful to think that people ſhould not only cheat one another, but that the name of God ſhall be uſed to ſanctify the lie? Can

(*b*) Heb. vi. 16. | (*c*) Eccl. viii. 2.

Can any intereſt of a family, any zeal for a perſon, be an atonement for the vileſt mixture of falſhood and blaſphemy? *God will not hold him guiltleſs who taketh his name in vain (d).*

Now, this is what *David* promiſes, that they who *ſwear by the Lord*, whoſe integrity he was fully aſſured of, ſhould *glory* under his government. No doubt of it, there were many crouding to his court at *Hebron*, whoſe loyalty roſe when *Saul* fell: they took their convictions from *Mount Gilboa*, as ſome in *England* did theirs from the battle at the *Boyne*. But theſe were his contempt. *Iſhboſheth*, *Saul*'s ſon, had two ſervants, *Baanah* and *Rechab* (*e*), who were employed in his houſe, which they could not have been, without giving him an aſſurance how hearty a zeal they had for the royal family. And, yet you ſee what a vain principle loyalty is when moral truth is wanting. They continue in that intereſt till *Abner* leaves it; but when they ſaw there was nothing to be got by their King, they not only *drop* him but *murder* him. And, though they had often called *David* an uſurper, yet now they bring him the head of the *right heir*.

What a ſad dependence muſt a prince have upon ſuch zealots as theſe? They will tell him of *obedience without reſerve*, that their lives and eſtates are at his command, that he has an authority to uſe them as he would do his cattle; and, which is the worſt of all, they clothe theſe lying words with the name of GOD. And, yet you ſee, when things come to the pinch, their ſovereign is their property, and inſtead of having the ſervice of *their* lives, he hath no ſecurity of his own. For if they cannot make a tool of his crown, they will make a ſale of his head. But, are ſuch ſwearers as theſe deſigned for the glory that *David* mentions? Are theſe the ſtrength of any government? Or ſhould their weight be allowed to caſt the ſcale, who

(*d*) Exod. xx. 7. (*e*) 2 Sam. iv. 2.

who would come in on either ſide? No, the Pſalmiſt meant a more upright ſort of people in the deſcription that he gives us.

2*dly*, In ſwearing by the LORD, they make the divine Glory the rule of their ſubjection. Can an oath in the name of GOD oblige me to diſhonour *him?* When I call a perſon my ſovereign, is my reaſon and my conſcience, from that time, his property? No, theſe I have received from the *King of Kings*; nor can I diſpoſe of them to any power upon earth, without being guilty of high-treaſon againſt heaven. But, this is what I have ſo often enlarged upon in other Sermons, that I ſhall diſmiſs it here.

2. This ſwearing by the LORD, may be underſtood of their *pure religion before God and our father*. The whole of his worſhip, and of our concern with him, is often expreſſed in this as the moſt important article, and there are ſeveral things that we muſt comprehend in ſuch a notion of a good man. If he is one that ſwears by the LORD,

It ſignifies an engagement that he has laid himſelf under to ſerve him. It is a making over all the right that he has either in ſoul or body; that they ſhall be the LORD's *in a perpetual covenant, that is never to be forgotten (f). Yield yourſelves to him, as thoſe that are alive from the dead, and your members inſtruments of righteouſneſs unto holineſs (g).* And this cannot be unleſs we take him to be the guide as well as the object of our duty. To act upon any other rules than he has given us, is a breach of our oath; it is *Swearing by the Lord, and ſwearing by Malcham (h).* This expreſſion in my text ſignifies that we are given up to him, and can, upon no account, depart from the commands that he has publiſhed, we avow his authority over us, and diſown every other pretenſion.

And

(f) Jer. l. 5.
(g) Rom. vi. 13.
(h) Zeph. i. 5.

And then, their ſwearing by him muſt have an influence upon their whole converſation. He that deals faithfully with GOD, will do ſo with men. For, by that oath, he has obliged himſelf to a *Conſcience void of offence towards both* (*i*). And certainly theſe ought to glory in a government which they do not only *ſerve*, but *adorn*; *Mine eyes*, ſays *David*, *ſhall be upon the faithful of the land, that he may ever dwell with me* (*k*): and that reſolution would come with him to the throne, which you find, *Pſal.* xvi. 2. *My goodneſs extends not unto thee, but unto the ſaints and to the excellent of the earth, in whom is all my delight.* Men who are afraid of diſpleaſing GOD, and full of an awe to his jealouſy, who dare not believe by proxy, or take their opinions upon truſt, do in thoſe very ſcruples, (whether they are right or wrong) give a public honour to conſcience. They let the world ſee, that there is ſomething that they cannot be hired to to do. The Scripture has diſtinguiſhed them from others, who ſtick at nothing. There is a mighty difference between him *that ſwears, and him that fears and oath* (*l*), who knows how great a ſolemnity it is.

Theſe may be deſpiſed, as they always are, by men that make religion only an engine of ſtate; they venture at all, and run through any form of worſhip, that has preferment on the other ſide, *ſuppoſing that gain is godlineſs*. And it is ſcarce to be imagined that they will object againſt a *poſture* in the church, who put themſelves into any in a court. But what aſſurance can theſe give to men, who are ſo looſe to thoſe concerns they have with GOD? They that ſwear to the LORD in truth, dare not take things for granted; they know he *has no pleaſure in fools* (*m*). It is of very little value with them what men ſay is lawful, if

(*i*) Acts xxiv. 16.
(*k*) Pſalm ci. 6.
(*l*) Eccl. ix. 2.
(*m*) Eccl. v. 4.

if there is but an appearance that GOD has told them otherwiſe. They do not work up a rule out of Scripture and councils, the voice of heaven, and the traditions of men; for, *what communion can light have with darkneſs?* Now theſe deſerve to *glory in a righteous cauſe*; they that are moſt faithful in the ſervice of GOD, are likely to be ſo in their allegiance to the King.

3. This ſwearing by the LORD, may refer to the *troubles* they had been in. The phraſe is taken in this ſenſe. *Lord, remember David and all his afflictions, how he ſware to the Lord, and vowed to the mighty God of Jacob* (*n*). It has been the practice of good people, when their fears were gathering within, or danger lowring over their heads, not only to ſpread their caſe before GOD, but to lay themſelves under new engagements when the mercy came. So did *Jacob*, when he run from his father's houſe, *If the Lord will be with me in the way that I go, and give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, then ſhall the Lord be my God* (*o*). And thus do the children of *Iſrael*, when King *Arad the Canaanite took ſome of them priſoners, they vowed a vow unto the Lord, and ſaid, If thou wilt indeed deliver this people into my hands, then will I deſtroy their cities* (*p*). And this they might do in the time of *David*'s baniſhment from the court. As his title to the crown had ſpread itſelf among the people, ſo the wiſhes of all good men were on his ſide. *Abigail* told him, that *God would build him a ſure houſe:* and it could not but raiſe in every thinking perſon a dread of what was coming upon them, when they ſaw King *Saul* indulge his envy at the expence of all public juſtice. Tho' *David* was the only man that he now purſued, yet what could a nation expect from one, who ſought the

(*n*) Pſalm cxxxiii. 1, 2.
(*o*) Gen. xxviii. 20, 21.
(*p*) Num. xxi. 2.

the life of his ſon, his beſt commander and trueſt friend? A prince that will ſacrifice all theſe engagements to a private paſſion, leaves no room for any confidence in his word. Who knows where the royal fury will fall next?

Upon this, the good people could not but deſire that they might be put into better hands; and perhaps, on that occaſion, they would make vows to the LORD, that if he would but unload them of a Tyrant, and ſet over them *a man after his own heart*, the eaſineſs of their ſtate ſhould promote the ardour of their duty. Theſe ought to *glory* in *David*'s government, it is what they had longed and prayed for. The mercy brings a claim with it upon *them*. GOD has their vows upon record, *what manner of perſons* they would be. They always attended the right intereſt as far as ever they could; and when their hands were tied, their mouths were open, in recommending it to *the Lord God of Sabaoth*.

2. The bleſſing deſigned for theſe is, that they *ſhall glory*. It is a ſenſe too low for theſe words, and does not expreſs enough of the mercy to think that it means no more than *the laughter of fools:* or that in this joy they arrogate any thing to themſelves; if they would ſay, at a diſtance from the bleſſing, *I will not truſt in my bow, neither ſhall my ſword ſave me* (*q*), they will take care to leave the praiſe where it ought to be, after the deliverance is come. It is not merely inſulting thoſe whoſe guilt and folly hath brought them low, that gives us either the temper or the happineſs that is here deſigned: but their glorying takes into it the following particulars.

1. Diſappointment of enemies.
2. An eaſineſs in their own property, and
3. A ſenſe of the divine hand in both.

1. It ſuppoſeth a defeat to the enemy. *When the*

(*q*) Pſalm xliv. 6.

wicked walk on every ſide, and the vileſt of men are exalted (*r*), though a believer hath his inward joys which the world can neither ſteal nor feel, yet nothing of this appears. *When righteous men do rejoice, there is a great glory; but when the wicked riſe, a man is hidden* (*s*). Therefore when the enemies of the LORD *conſume like the fat of lambs*, it is no more than a tribute to the Providence for others to be glad: and the greater compaſs they took in their deſign, the more aſſurance they uſed to talk with, the brighter ſtrokes of a Deity may be ſeen in their fall. Thus did *David* inlarge his thoughts upon the miſery of *Doeg* the *Edomite*. That wretch wrought himſelf into *Saul*'s eſteem by falſhood and malice: the King's envy, and the informer's ambition were here making their courtſhip to one another, the favourite thought nothing too vile that would pleaſe the King; and the King thought nothing too great to reward the favourite. But *God would deſtroy him for ever, pluck him out of his place, and root him out of the land of the living* (*t*). *The righteous were to ſee this and laugh at him*; not barely in a diſdain of his miſery, but with a return of thanks to the juſtice of Providence: *Lo, this is the man that made not God his ſtrength, but truſted in the abundance of his riches, and ſtrengthened himſelf in his wickedneſs.*

Beſides, there is a public advantage in this, for *when it goes well with the righteous the city rejoiceth, but when the wicked periſh there is ſhouting.* This diſtinction doth human nature make between thoſe villanies that are of a private ſort, and ſuch as are done againſt a community. *Men do not deſpiſe a thief if he ſteal to ſatisfy his ſoul when he is hungry* (*u*). There is a pity follows ſuch a one to his execution; but when there are ſinners of a greater extent, the reſentment is of the ſame compaſs with the wickedneſs.

2. This

(*r*) Pſalm xii. 8.
(*s*) Proverbs xxviii. 12.
(*t*) Pſalm lii. 5, 6, 7.
(*u*) Proverbs vi. 30.

2. This glorying ſuppoſeth an eaſineſs in their property, that it is either regained from the plunder, or ſecured from the deſigns of ſinners. *They intended evil againſt thee, they imagined a miſchievous device that they were not able to perform* (*x*). One would wonder that ever creatures ſhould delight in the ruin of their own kind; but ſo it is, an envious man ſhall have more regard for his luſt than he hath for his nature. He is of that value to himſelf; as to think his own greatneſs well raiſed, though the foundation of it be laid in the tears or blood of thouſands. But they will find that *the getting of treaſures by a lying tongue is a vanity toſſed to and fro of them that ſeek death* (*y*). What a reach had *Haman* in his pride? For the neglect of a little civility, he doth not only lay out the death of *Mordecai*, but of a whole nation, who were no ſharers in the rudeneſs that he ſuppoſed was offered to him: and who could think that *Eſther* ſhould have had any occaſion to pray in the manner as ſhe did, not for her own and her people's liberty, for *had they been captives ſhe would have held her peace*; but for their lives? Now when people of theſe projects are defeated, *The upright have all good things in poſſeſſion.*

And of this kind, are ſeveral of our public mercies; we may take the great deliverance that began on *this day* in ſuch a view; we had loſt the Laws, *the beſt traditions of the fathers*, and the Goſpel was a going too. That there was a deſign to ſhare all that *pertained to life and godlineſs* between *France* and *Rome*, is as plain as that we had a King who was a *tool* to the one, and a *bigot* to the other: whenever any oppoſition was given to theſe encroachments, it could not be without hazard of life to him that made it: and indeed, the meaſures of cruelty became ſo very familiar with them, as if they deſpaired of making con-

(*x*) Pſalm xxi. 11. (*y*) Prov. xxi. 6.

verts with reaſon, and reſolved to do it with blood. It was not meerly a perſecution againſt the Diſſenters, though if you conſider who have been moſt active in that work, you will uſually find them to be either *French Apes* or *Iriſh Wolves:* but beſides the baniſhing of your miniſters, the fining, goaling, and ſtarving of your people, they ſtruck at all profeſſions, every quality, both ſexes; as if there was no way to prove the Pope the vicar of CHRIST, but by declaring him the enemy of mankind: and when things were run thus far, GOD was pleaſed to put *a new ſong into your mouths*, by making the party your jeſt, which had been your terror, and driving that Monarch to *France*, in the quality of a *priſoner*, who had too long ſerved them in that of a *pupil*. It is not only a change in the throne that we take notice of, that for a meer creature of Prieſts and Tyrants you had it filled with *a man of underſtanding:* but the difference extended itſelf to every corner. You were then reſtored to your freedom; your religion was *in yourſelves and not in another*; you were not to be attempted by a ſpawn of friers, who had no other arguments but only to juggle for a miracle, and threaten with martyrdom, that if their folly could not prevail, their faggots might. You have then done with the fear of *dragoons*, who had a plain leſſon ſet before them in *France*, and were ready to copy it out here. GOD had pity on you, and ſent you one who was formed with thoſe noble paſſions of courage and tenderneſs, that made him a ſcourge to *evil-doers*, *and a praiſe to them that do well.*

And I the rather call you to a freſh remembrance of this now, becauſe it is juſt revived: we have lately received the laſt and nobleſt conſequence of it, *the family of* Hanover *upon the throne of* Great-Britain. By this, the hand of Providence hath touched the *Revolution* over again, and given the lines a new ſtrength

ſtrength and force. I need not tell you, that they who are enemies to the memory of King *William*, are ſo to the perſon of King *George*; it was not too groſs to call him an uſurper, and load his name for the *Act of Settlement*, which they repreſented as a *curſed legacy*. The work was running back again in ſuch a way, as if they thought no method too ſcandalous to promote their cauſe. Your *Meeting-houſes* were pulled down out of a zeal for the Church, and this by a rabble who never uſed the name of GOD but in an oath. There were famous proceſſions thro' ſeveral parts of the kingdom, in defiance of law and juſtice: ſo that if the queſtion was now to be put, which the *chief Captain* gave to *Paul*, we ſhould know where to look for an anſwer, *Art not thou that Egyptian, who before theſe days madeſt an uproar, and leddeſt out into the wilderneſs four thouſand men that were murderers* (z)? The Parliament, who had done juſtice to the *Revolution* was diſſolved with ſhame, and expoſed in the *ſongs of drunkards*. The alliance on which we had our human ſecurity, treated at firſt with coldneſs, and then with abhorrence; our perſons threatened upon all occaſions: *They hunted our ſteps, that we could not go in our ſtreets* (a). The party that thought of returning to their old bondage, did it with ſuch views as *Eſau* had upon his father's death, *The days of mourning are at hand, and then ſurely will I kill my brother Jacob:* but, *Bleſſed be God, who hath not given us a prey to their teeth; the net is broken and we are eſcaped* (b). We may look upon our property in its whole compaſs to be now ſecured: there are more of our hopes called into *this government*, than there was into that of the late King; becauſe he had none to bear his name, and fill the throne when he *ſlept with his fathers*; but GOD hath been more liberal

(z) Acts xxi. 38.
(a) Lam. iv. 18.
(b) Pſalm cxxiv. 6, 7.

in this laſt bounty. We have the protection which the wiſe man ſo much commended, that *if one prevail againſt him, two ſhall withſtand him, and a threefold cord is not eaſily broken* (*c*).

3. Another thing included in this glory, is a ſenſe of God's hand in the whole mercy. Whatever means are made uſe of to deliver them who are *appointed to die*, yet their *ſalvation is of the Lord* (*d*). But ſometimes he doth it in ſuch a way that it ſhall be *all his own. They got not the land by their ſword, neither did their own arm ſave them, but thy right hand and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance, becauſe thou hadſt a favour to them* (*e*). And the more divinity appears in any bleſſing the greater joy doth it raiſe in a good man. *Glory ye in his holy name, let the heart of them rejoice that ſeek the Lord* (*f*).

3. I ſhall conſider the extent of this bleſſing: *Every one that ſweareth by him ſhall glory:* none were to be excluded, who had any ſhare either of good wiſhes or diligence in favouring his righteous cauſe.

1. It ſhould reach to high and low: and,

2. Not be limited to any ſect or party.

1. Perſons of all ranks were to have the benefit of it. *The righteous conſiders the cauſe of the poor, but the wicked regards not to know it* (*g*). Theſe changes in *Iſrael* would have been no great bleſſing, if they had only conſiſted in *another court*, that *Joab* ſhould be General inſtead of *Abner*. Do we think that Providence throws all the gains of ſuch a Revolution into a few hands? If that is all, with us it is a ſmall matter who wears a crown: but *David* ſpeaks as if the whole nation was to be the better for his government; *The land and all the inhabitants of it are diſſolved, I bear up the pillars of it* (*h*). The glory of *Solomon*'s reign

(*c*) Eccleſ. iii. 12.
(*d*) Pſal. cxxiv. 8.
(*e*) Pſal. xliv. 3.
(*f*) Pſal. cv. 3.
(*g*) Prov. xxix. 7.
(*h*) Pſal. lxxv. 1.

reign was not to be a ſplendid houſe, or fine gardens, or a noble attendance; but this, that *all Iſrael, from Dan to Beerſheba, ſat every man under his vine, and under his fig-tree* (*i*).

2. This mercy is not limited to a party. People in all ages have had different apprehenſions about the worſhip of God. And we need not doubt but, as the minds of men were of the ſame caſt in *David*'s time as they are now, that there were ſome varieties among them. But in the diſtribution of his favours, he hath no regard to that: the great queſtions upon this head were determined by Juſtice and Prudence. *Juſtice* will give the diſtinction of reward to thoſe that have had that of danger; and *Prudence* will conſider no other qualification in a man, than what maketh him equal to his truſt. Beſides it is an unwarrantable jumbling of things that are no way related, that a civil liſt ſhould be moulded in a religious creed; and none to be ſervants of the Prince, but they who have got the ſtamp of the Clergy. *David* would not be thus confined in his dependence upon the people, or his regards to them. It was the glory of his reign to be ſerved by all: *Gilead is mine, Manaſſeh is mine, Ephraim is the ſtrength of my hand, and Judah is my law-giver* (*k*). *In the multitude of people is the King's ſafety, but in the want of people is the deſtruction of the Prince* (*l*): and therefore, to cool the affections of the ſubjects, or make them uncapable of ſerving him, is to weaken the crown.

III. The laſt thing in my text, that makes up the glory of a good reign, is, Juſtice upon Offenders; *the mouth of them that ſpeak lies ſhall be ſtopped.* I muſt here conſider;

1. The Crime of theſe people: and,
2. Their Puniſhment.

(*i*) 1 Kings iv. 25.
(*k*) Pſal. cviii. 8.
(*l*) Prov. xiv. 28.

1. Their ſin is of that nature as makes them both abominable to GOD and inconſiſtent with ſociety; for *a poor man is better than a liar.* If you compare the phraſe here with the other places where you often find it, you will ſee that *David* underſtands it of thoſe *lies* that were contrived againſt himſelf, and had a public influence among the people. And *if that which is now, is that which hath been* (*l*); if we may gueſs at his times by our own, the deceits that lay heavieſt upon him, and what he deſired might be followed with a full and free juſtice, were of three ſorts.

1. Falſe Stories by ſome about the court,
2. Falſe Promiſes by *Saul* himſelf. And,
3. Falſe Doctrines by thoſe who endeavour to make ſlavery paſs upon the conſcience.

1*ſt*, He often complains of a wretched crew, that got the King's ear, and carried on the prejudice againſt him: and no wonder there were ſo many of them when they were paid for every ſtory. But upon this head doth *David* expoſtulate with him, *Wherefore hearеſt thou mens words, ſaying, David ſeeketh thy hurt* (*m*)? And he ſuppoſeth an influence of this kind, the next time that he gave *Saul* his life. *If they be the children of men that have ſtirred thee up againſt me, curſed be they before the Lord* (*n*). He knew there was a party that had nothing to diſtinguiſh themſelves by, nor any other ſubſiſtence than upon the folly and paſſion of the King: and therefore to pleaſe him, and to ſave themſelves, they talk without any guard either of truth or modeſty. He argues with them, *How long, ye ſons of men, will ye turn my glory into ſhame? How long will you love vanity, and ſpeak after leaſing* (*o*)? Theſe were enemies to the ſucceſſion, though ſometimes they carried on their deſigns with a ſhew of zeal the other way. *How long will ye imagine miſchief againſt a man? Ye ſhall be ſlain all of you; as a bowing*

(*l*) Eccleſ. i. 9.
(*m*) 1 Sam. xxiv. 9.
(*n*) 1 Sam xxvi. 19.
(*o*) Pſal. iv. 2.

a bowing wall shall ye be, and as a tottering fence. They only consult to cast him down from his excellency. They delight in lies, they bless with their mouth, but curse inwardly (*p*). And he found this corruption then so general, that he complains, *Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree a lie; to be laid in the balance they are altogether lighter than vanity* (*q*). But there were some so notorious in treachery, that their characters went along with their names; and therefore it made *Saul*'s administration to be scandalous when he committed the chief employment to a known prostitute. *Doeg* the *Edomite*, was *over the servants*; and before he accused and murdered *the Priests of the Lord*, it is what any one would have thought him capable of, *I knew in that day*, saith *David*, *when Doeg the Edomite was there, that he would surely tell Saul* (*r*).

2*dly*, He might carry the charge a great deal higher, to the false promises that were made by the King himself; for first, he gave his royal word and oath to *Jonathan*, that *David should not be slain* (*s*); and yet the next opportunity he would have been the assassin with his own hands. His pride and fury seemed to be thawed down by the generous pity that *David* had for him in the cave. *Thou art more righteous than I, for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded the evil.* Nay he goes farther, and delivers an opinion that he had taken so much pains to hide, *I know that thou shalt be King, and the kingdom of Israel shall be established in thine hands* (*t*). So that in that sense, the succession was nearest his heart, though it was the farthest from his inclination: and yet as if he was in pain to sink his reputation, and to defile the throne he sat on, he is soon after this at the head of an army again. The next time *David* spares him, he

(*p*) Psal. lxii. 3, 4.
(*q*) Psal. lxii. 9.
(*r*) 1 Sam. xx. 22.
(*s*) 1 Sam. xix. 6,
(*t*) 1 Sam. xxiv. 17, 19.

he diſſolves into the old confeſſion, and promiſeth fair, *I have ſinned: return my ſon David, I will no more do thee harm, becauſe my ſoul was precious in thy ſight this day: behold I have played the fool, I have erred exceedingly* (*u*). Such an opinion as this would have been aſſurance enough from any other man; but *David* who knew that there is always ſomething greater with a Tyrant than his conſcience, his honour, or his ſalvation, cannot depend upon one word that he ſaith, but will rather venture himſelf among the *Philiſtines*, to whom he had been a glorious enemy, than truſt to the declarations of a ſhuffling Prince. How mean and low had he brought himſelf by this unſteddineſs? Who can more expoſe the honour of Sovereigns than they that put them upon a violation of their word, which is ſo far from advancing the dignity of their thrones, that it makes them a ſcandal to their nature. *Excellent ſpeech does not become a fool, much leſs do lying lips a Prince* (*x*).

3*dly*, I may ſay with the Apoſtle in another caſe, that there might be *falſe Prophets among the people, as there are falſe Teachers among you* (*y*). *Unruly, vain deceivers, whoſe mouths muſt be ſtopped, who ſubvert whole houſes, teaching things which they ought not for filthy lucre ſake: always liars, evil beaſts, and ſlow bellies* (*z*). The mind of God had been declared in *Iſrael* about the ſucceſſion. *David* was anointed by *Samuel*; and the Spirit of the Lord was daily forming his ſoul to the great and awful truſt. It was he that led out and brought in the army of *Iſrael* as a commander, and every one knew that he was to be their King; but they had ſome among them who could talk of hereditary and indefeaſible right; for upon this ground did a poor ſhiftleſs Prince incourage a faction to proclaim him, and make a mighty ſtir for him. There were no pretenſions that *Iſhboſheth* was likely

(*u*) 1 Sam xxvi. 21.
(*x*) Prov. xii. 7.
(*y*) 2 Pet. ii. 1.
(*z*) Tit. i. 10—12.

likely to be a better ruler than *David*, or that GOD had not fixed the succeſſion, but they muſt go upon principles that ſome in our day are governed by, that Kings cannot forfeit either for themſelves or their poſterity; that a crown muſt be taken in no other notion than as an inheritance; that though a Prince *does* no juſtice, yet ſtill he ſhall *feel* none. Theſe muſt be the arguments that the friends of the Pretender in *David*'s time would juſtify themſelves with; and the notions you know are advanced by ſome among us, we hope with the ſame ſucceſs that attended the others; for the follies of *theſe men ſhall be made manifeſt as theirs alſo was* (*a*): *Should not the multitude of words be anſwered? Shall a man full of talk be juſtified? Shall their lies make men hold their peace? And when they are mockers, ſhall no man make them aſhamed* (*b*)?

Shall we be told that CHRIST, who came to give give *peace on earth* and ſhew *a good-will towards men*, hath made us ſlaves? Or that they whom he *bought with a price*, are ſold again to a Tyrant? Are we to have no other notion of the *ſheep of his paſture* than as *ſheep for the ſlaughter?* Are theſe *words by which we muſt be ſaved?* Are theſe the *glad tidings of great joy that ſhould be to all people?* Is this *doing the work of an Evangeliſt*, and making *full proof of their Miniſtry*, to tell a monſter, that he hath a *divine right* to be wicked, and that no Chriſtians have a *human right* to reſiſt him? This is ſpeaking lies in the name of the LORD: and yet it is hard to find an intereſt of cruelty carrying on, but ſome of this tribe are tools to promote it. It is a method very ancient in the world, for a Stateſman to be the leader, and a Prieſt the fag-end of a party. I think the Scripture itſelf hath given it no ſofter a name. *The ancient and honourable he is the head, and the Prophet that teacheth lies, he is the tail* (*c*).

And

(*a*) 2 Tim. iii. 9.
(*b*) Job xi. 2, 3.
(*c*) Iſai. ix. 15.

And how well may theſe accounts be transferred to our day? O what a guilt of treachery does there lie ſomewhere? What a vile ſurrender of our ſafety, trade and honour, only to keep one Monarch on a throne, and a few of his creatures out of a jail! I will not deſcend to particulars, which are open enough to every one's obſervation; but you may comprehend the management of the laſt four years, in thoſe ſad words of the Prophet: *Ephraim feeds on wind, and followeth after the eaſt-wind, he daily increaſeth lies and deſolations, and they make a covenant with the Aſſyrians, and oil is carried into Egupt* (*d*). Were it not that the late turn of Providence hath begun to *roll away our reproach, Engliſh* credit would have been very much the ſame with what the *Romans* uſed to call the *Punic faith*. How vile muſt a people be under the weight of that charge? *Thou wenteſt to the King with ointments, and didſt increaſe thy perfumes; and didſt ſend thy meſſengers afar off, and didſt debaſe thyſelf even to hell* (*e*). But whether or no this work is agreeable to the LORD of hoſts, I will leave you to judge by the aim that he hath given to his vengeance. Theſe are among the things that *he hates*, and that *are an abomination to him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that ſhed innocent blood* (*f*). But that leads me to the ſecond thing.

2. The puniſhment of this people, which you find in this and the two former verſes; where there are ſeveral things that expreſs both a divine and human juſtice.

They that ſeek my ſoul to deſtroy it, ſhall go down to the lower parts of the earth. The leaſt and weakeſt ſenſe of theſe words is, that they are to be degraded from their honours. Inſtead of ſwelling with titles, and baſking themſelves in warm employments, they ſhall be reduced to a ſtation where popular ſcorn may reach

(*d*) Hoſ. xii. 1.
(*e*) Iſai. lvii. 4.
(*f*) Prov. vi. 17.

reach them. *Men shall clap their hands at him, and shall hiss him out of his place* (*g*). *A righteous man hates lying; but a wicked man is lothesome, and comes to shame* (*h*). He goes on,

They shall be a portion for foxes. If you take this in a metaphorical sense, you will see their sin enstamped upon their punishment: that the sly and tricking persons who led them into a snare will leave them there; and as they had the guilt to make them *knaves*, will have the triumph in shewing them *fools*. That is one way of becoming a portion for foxes. But certainly it here signifies that capital justice shall be done upon them; *They shall fall by the sword*, and their carcasses be left unburied, as not worthy to be received into that earth which had groaned under their oppression.

And then, in my text you find, *their mouths are to be stopped.* No farther encouragement shall be given to them, their schemes are unraveled; they will either be totally silent, or talk with a confusion that will but expose them. *A sword is upon the liars, and they shall dote* (*i*). *Judgment will return unto righteousness, and all the upright in heart shall follow it* (*k*). And what a sweep would the hand of justice take, if the mouths of those liars were to be stopped who have deceived and bullied so many nations at once? Oh! remember, remember the promises made to the *Catalonians*, and see them all soked in the blood of those brave people who *waited for a vain help.*

Justice upon offenders, is so far from sullying the work of God in the rescue of a people, that it is no small part of their future security. Nor can the privileges of a nation be better cemented than in the blood of those that betrayed them. The Prophet tells us, that there are lenities which cannot be used but at the public expence. *Let favour be shewed to the wicked,*

(*g*) Job xxvii. 23.
(*h*) Prov. xiii. 5.
(*i*) Jer. l. 36.
(*k*) Psal. xciv. 15.

wicked, yet will he not learn righteouſneſs; in the land of uprightneſs will he deal unjuſtly, and will not behold the majeſty of the Lord (*k*). And it is a maxim too divine and glorious to be dropped, *he ſhall have judgment without mercy, who has ſhewed no mercy. David* was inſtructed to this in a very awful way. At the beginning of his reign there was *a famine for three years*, and the LORD told him, *It was for Saul, and for his bloody houſe, becauſe in his zeal to the children of Iſrael, he had ſlain the Gibeonites* (*l*). Theſe people were taken into league in *Joſhua*'s days; and though they are condemned to perpetual ſervice, to be *hewers of wood and drawers of water*; yet GOD will have alliances to be ſo ſacred, that an injury to *them* ſhall keep his wrath lowring over the country till ſeven men of the blood-royal werehanged before the palace-gates in *Gibeah of Saul whom the Lord did chooſe.*

And we find the laſt words of *David* uniform to this, which were a direction to *Solomon*, *He that rules over men muſt be juſt, ruling in the fear of the Lord. And he ſhall be like the light of the morning when the ſun riſes; even a morning without clouds, as the tender graſs ſpringing out of the earth by a clear ſhining after rain* (*m*). Theſe metaphors deſcribe the royal equity that ſhall make proper diſtributions of puniſhment and favour; to ſcatter them whoſe works are in the dark, and to refreſh the ſouls of the poor and needy. In the next verſe he laments, that *his houſe is not ſo with God*, and that he would *not make it grow*; but he intimates, from what ſort of people this danger would come upon the royal family, as in fact it did. Men of bloody and oppreſſive tempers inſinuated themſelves into *Rehoboam*'s favour, by giving ſuch advice as coſt him ten tribes at once. *David* ſeems to know beforehand what ſuch barbarous counſels would bring his grandſon to; *The ſons of Belial ſhall be all of them thruſt away becauſe they*

(*k*) Iſai. xxvi. 9.
(*l*) 2 Sam. xxi. 1.
(*m*) 2 Sam xxiii. 2, 3.

they cannot be taken with hands; but the man that ſhall touch them muſt be fenced with iron, and the ſtaff of a ſpear, and they ſhall be conſumed with fire in the ſame place.

This is what he left with *Solomon* upon his death-bed to regard thoſe who had owned him in the time of his adverſity. *Shew kindneſs to the ſons of Barzillai the Gileadite, and let them be of thoſe that eat bread at thy table; for ſo came they to me when I fled becauſe of Abſalom thy brother* (*n*). But he warned him againſt the errors of clemency, as that which himſelf had ſuffered by. *Shimei the ſon of Gera* had *curſed David* as he went along weeping, and arraigned the Revolution that GOD had wrought in *Iſrael. Come out thou bloody man, and thou man of Belial: the Lord has returned upon thee all the blood of the houſe of Saul, in whoſe ſtead thou haſt reigned* (*o*). And yet, ſuch is the force of impudence and fawning, that this man, by pretenſions to an early loyalty, obtains his pardon. *Let not my Lord impute iniquity unto me, neither do thou remember that which thy ſervant did perverſly in the day that my Lord the King went out of Jeruſalem, that the King ſhould take it to his heart, for thy ſervant does know that I have ſinned; therefore, behold I am come this day the firſt of all the houſe of Joſeph, to meet my Lord the King* (*p*). It is true *David* was then ſo pleaſed with his Reſtoration, that he neglects the demands of public juſtice, and what he had vowed to do. *I will early deſtroy all the wicked of the land, that I may cut off all evil-doers from the houſe of the Lord* (*q*). But now he is going out of the world, he owns the deficiencies of his Government. We muſt not think that he ſaid this from a private revenge, or that he was then deſerted by the Spirit of GOD. We are told the reverſe of that, and muſt rather ſuppoſe it was the LORD that ſpake by him; that *a divine ſentence was then*

(*n*) 1 Kings ii. 7.
(*o*) 2 Sam. xvi. 8.
(*p*) 2 Sam. xix. 19.
(*q*) Pſal. ci. 8.

then in the mouth of the King, and his lips did not tranſgreſs in judgment (*r*). *Thou haſt with thee there Shimei the ſon of Gera, a Benjamite of Bahurim, who curſed me with a grievous curſe, in the day when I went to Mahanaim; but he came down to meet me at Jordan, and I ſware to him by the Lord, ſaying, I will not put thee to death by the ſword. Now therefore hold him not guiltleſs; for thou art a wiſe man, and knoweſt what thou oughteſt to do to him; but his hoary head bring thou down to the grave with blood* (*s*). And after *Solomon* had gone through theſe executions, *i. e.* turned out *Abiathar* from being *Prieſt of the Lord*; ſlain *Adonijah*, who ſaid the *kingdom was his by right*, and by the death of *Joab* had *put away innocent blood from the houſe of his father*, and now had diſpatched *Shimei*, it gave him a proſpect of an eaſy reign, he returns thus upon himſelf; *King Solomon ſhall be bleſt, and the throne of David be eſtabliſhed for ever* (*t*).

And that the mouth of liars ſhould thus be ſtopped, agrees with thoſe maxims that were impreſſed upon himſelf, and which ſtand in ſuch a light, that they muſt convince whenever they are known. *If a Ruler hearken to lies, all his ſervants are wicked* (*u*). They ſee either his weakneſs or his corruption; they will no longer regard him as a Sovereign, but either as a child or a fury. On the other hand, when the *King ſits on the throne of judgment, he ſcatters away all evil with his eyes. A wiſe King ſcatters the wicked, and brings the wheel over them* (*x*). Nor can there be a *rejoicing in the Lord* for the Prince, or a glory *for thoſe who ſwear by him*, if *he is not the miniſter of God for good, but bears the ſword in vain* (*y*). *The law is made for liars and perjured perſons* (*z*).

Theſe

(*r*) Prov. xvi. 10.
(*s*) 1 Kings ii. 8, 9.
(*t*) 1 Kings iii. 45.
(*u*) Prov. xxix. 12.
(*x*) Prov. xx. 8, 26.
(*y*) Rom. xiii. 4.
(*z*) 1 Tim. i. 10.

Theſe were the views that *David* had upon his acceſſion to the throne; thus he deſigned to live and rule. That it was not in the power of his hand to go thorough with theſe noble reſolutions, you may learn from an early complaint: *I am this day weak, though anointed King, and theſe men, the ſons of Zeruiah, are too hard for me* (*a*); but under this impotence of Government, he refers the caſe to the Judge of all the earth, who will do right; *The Lord ſhall reward the doer of evil according to his wickedneſs.* Such a Government as I have here deſcribed, looks like that of a Redeemer, who, as *the King of Saints, rejoices in God*; he is *anointed with the oil of gladneſs above his fellows:* he has provided *glory*, honour and immortality for them that love him; but *ſilence*, confuſion and torment to all deceivers. For into the place where he lives ſhall *nothing enter that defiles, or works an abomination, or loves and makes a lie* (*b*): *But the throne of God, and of the Lamb ſhall be in it, and his ſervants ſhall ſerve him; and they ſhall ſee his face, and his name ſhall be in their foreheads* (*c*).

(*a*) 1 Sam. iii. 39.
(*b*) Rev. xxi. 27.
(*c*) Rev. xxii. 3, 4.

SERMON XVI.

Juſtice and Property the Glory of a Deliverance.

In Two SERMONS Preached JANUARY 20, (being a Day of Public Thankſgiving for his Majeſty's ſafe Arrival) and JANUARY 23, 1715.

NEHEMIAH V. 13.

Alſo I ſhook my Lap, and ſaid, So God ſhake out every Man from his Houſe, and from his Labour, that performeth not his Promiſe, even thus be he ſhaken out and emptied. And all the Congregation ſaid, Amen, and praiſed the Lord.

THERE is ſcarce a verſe in this chapter, but what ſuits the great occaſion upon which I have choſen my text: and indeed, the whole ſtory of *Nehemiah*, and his conduct in public affairs, is ſo much like the times we are fallen into, that ſome reflections upon the ſtate of things in their day, may lead us to make the beſt uſe of what Providence hath done in ours.

There are three particulars to be obſerved in the caſe of that people.

1. That God had given them a very great deliverance, which no human reaſon could ever have

hoped for: it was not the manner of thoſe nations that had taken them captive, to make any reſtitution, and it is a thing ſo ungrateful to human nature, that we muſt always reckon it a divine work when Tyrants are brought to refund: it is true, they had the prophecies of *Jeremiah*, and other good men, all along to ſoften their bondage, and by thoſe *Books they might know the number of years in which the Lord would accompliſh the deſolations of Jeruſalem* (*a*). But ſtill it was ſo amazing in itſelf, that what they had often ſought with prayer, they cannot but receive with wonder; for *when the Lord turned again the captivity of Sion, we were like them that dreamed, then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with ſinging. The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad* (*b*). And if you conſider but this ſalvation in the two main branches of it, you will ſtill go deeper into the ſurprize that ever any thing of that nature ſhould happen. They are reſtored to the *religion*, as well as the *liberties* of their fathers: the ſame decree that allowed them to repair the city, commands them to build the temple. This order came at firſt from *Cyrus*, whoſe character in other hiſtories is vile enough; and when we read of him in the book of God, it makes him no better than a groſs idolater: *For Jacob my ſervant's ſake, and Iſrael mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name; I have ſirnamed thee though thou haſt not known me* (*c*). We there read with what a greatneſs he ſpread his arms over the earth. *Thus ſaith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, his right hand have I holden to ſubdue nations before him, and I will looſe the loins of Kings, to open before him the two-leaved gates, and the gates ſhall not be ſhut* (*d*). And ſo in another place, *I have called up one from the north, and he ſhall come; from the riſing of the ſun, ſhall he call upon my name? He ſhall come*

(*a*) Dan. ix. 2.
(*b*) Pſalm cxxvi. 1, 2, 3.
(*c*) Iſa. lxv. 4.
(*d*) Iſa. lxv. 1.

come upon princes as upon morter, and as the potter treads the clay (*e*). And yet the perſon who had ſuch an appetite for conqueſt, gives up a former captivity, as if he alone was to have an univerſal monarchy, without the temper that always attends it, which is an univerſal cruelty, *Thus ſaith Cyrus King of Perſia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath the Lord God of heaven given me, and he hath charged me to build him an houſe in Jeruſalem, which is in Judah; who is there among you of all his people, the Lord his God be with him, let him go up* (*f*).

And though this work was hindered by thoſe who *hired counſellors* againſt the *Jews* in that reign, and was totally at at end in the days of *Artaxerxes*, yet God revived it again in the government of *Darius:* all the deceitful arguments, that it *was a rebellious and a bad city, and had been hurtful to Kings*, that it would leſſen the revenue, and cut off a branch of the empire, theſe were controled by a divine impreſſion upon the royal conſcience. *Darius* acted like one who hated thoſe maxims of cruelty, that make brutes both of princes and people, the former in ravage, the latter in ſlavery; *Let them*, ſaith he, *offer ſacrifices of ſweet ſavour to the God of heaven, and pray for the life of the King, and of his ſon; and I have made a decree, that whoever ſhall alter this work, let timber be pulled down from his houſe, and being ſet up, let him be hanged thereon, and let his houſe be made a dunghil for this; and the God that cauſed his name to dwell there, deſtroy all Kings and people that ſhall put to their hands to alter and deſtroy the houſe of God which is at Jeruſalem* (*g*). What a Deliverance was this! *They ſaid among the heathen, The Lord hath done great things for them:* but

II. The work met with a great deal of oppoſition ſeveral ways.

(*e*) Iſa. lx. 25.
(*f*) Ezra i. 2.
(*g*) Ezra vi. 10, 11, 12.

1. There were public enemies to the deſign. In the firſt expedition we read of, *Tatnai, governor on this ſide the river Shethar-boznai* (*h*), that offered to build with the *Jews*, and becauſe they were refuſed, made all the falſe repreſentations of them to the court that they were able to form. In *Nehemiah*'s time, we meet with the ſame ſpirit in other perſons, there was *Sanballat the Heronite, and Tobiah the ſervant, the Ammonite, and Geſhem the Arabian* (*i*); theſe oppoſed the good deſign with all the variety that malice could furniſh: ſometimes they called it ſedition; *What is this thing that ye will do? Will ye rebel againſt the King* (*k*)? Though *Nehemiah* could have anſwered that inſinuation by the letters, or orders of council that he brought along with him; yet he takes no notice of that, but replies to them in the utmoſt contempt, both of their perſons and argument: *The God of heaven, he will proſper us, therefore we his ſervants will ariſe and build, but you have no portion, nor right, nor memorial in Jeruſalem* (*l*).

2. The work was incumbered another way, and that was by thoſe who had a ſhare in promoting it. The very *Jews* themſelves, the parties in this good deſign, run into thoſe vile and wretched methods that ſhocked the whole cauſe at once: it had like to have periſhed in their own hands; and this not by miſtake, or a few ſlips of policy, but by downright wickedneſs; things that were inconſiſtent both with the honour of God, and the ſecurity of their brethren. Theſe may be reduced to two heads, which I will only juſt mention now, and enlarge upon them as I get farther into the diſcourſe.

Firſt, One of the crimes that was fooliſh, and had like to have proved fatal, was a clemency to the public and notorious enemies of the cauſe. Such as were for keeping the people in bondage, had wove themſelves

(*h*) Ezra iii. 2.
(*i*) Neh. ii. 10.
(*k*) Neh. ii. 19.
(*l*) Neh. ii. 20.

themſelves into the families of others, who pretended a zeal to bring them out of it: we find an unhappy acquaintance between plunderers and patriots; men who had built the wall, and thoſe who had laughed at it. The two oppoſite cauſes of bondage and liberty, of hell and heaven are forgot, and people are ſo looſe from their own pretenſions, that what they adorned in words, they ſunk in things. The concord that ſeems impoſſible in nature becomes eaſy to corruption: there is a friendſhip between light and darkneſs, between *Chriſt* and *Belial* (*m*), and,

Secondly, At the ſame time that theſe perſons were ſo complaiſant to enemies, they are in the other extreme to their own brethren. When clemency is directed by a *wiſdom that is from above* (*n*), it is uniform and glorious like the rule under which it moves; it will be *firſt pure and then peaceable*, and though it is *gentle and eaſy to be intreated*, yet it is *without partiality and without hypocriſy*: but when it is only prompted by the luſt of man, when we enter into it upon nothing higher than private intereſt and perſonal views, it is the moſt unſhapely and disfigured thing in the world: in ſome caſes it gives what the law forbids, in others it denies what the law commands. When people are ſo very gentle to public enemies, they will be as ſevere to public friends: their paſſions are in diſorder and tumult from firſt to laſt. Thus it is in all qualities. The Prophets that *ſtrengthened the hands of the wicked in his wickedneſs, by promiſing him life* (*o*), at the ſame time, *made the hearts of the righteous ſad*. *Saul*, who was ſo very tender of *Amalek* againſt the law of God, in his purſuit of *David*, runs away from the common juſtice of man. *Ahab*, who had ſo little regard to his own ſubjects, as to murder all that he could find of the true Religion among them, hath ſuch an extreme lenity in another caſe, that he

(*m*) 2 Cor. vi. 14, 15.
(*n*) Jam. iii. 17.
(*o*) Ezek. xiii. 22.

lets go a man out of his hand whom God had appointed to utter deſtruction (p): and thus it was in the hiſtory before us; theſe very perſons who were open to the acquaintance of ſuch as they ought to have abhorred, are quite cloſed up to the danger and intereſt of thoſe that were in the ſame cauſe with themſelves. *There was a great cry of the people againſt their brethren the Jews (q);* and the complaint runs upon two heads. *Firſt*, that they were little better than *ſlaves* to their own countrymen: and *ſecondly*, that by the ſame inequality of management, they were become *beggars* at home: they had loſt their eſtates for the cauſe, and were now giving up their perſons, and under no more proſpect of being relieved by the common Deliverance, than they were without it. You have them all throwing in their grievances, *There were ſome that ſaid, We our ſons and our daughters are many, therefore we take up corn for them that they may eat and live: there were alſo that ſaid, We have mortgaged our lands, and vineyards, and houſes, that we might buy corn becauſe of the dearth. There were alſo that ſaid, We have borrowed money for the King's tribute, and that upon our lands and vineyards, yet now our fleſh is as the fleſh of our brethren, our children as their children; and we bring into bondage our ſons and our daughters to be ſervants, and ſome of our daughters are brought into bondage already, neither is it in our power to redeem them, for other men have our lands and vineyards (r).* Theſe were vices that incumbred the work of GOD, and made it go on heavily among them. But,

III. Another thing that you obſerve from the ſtory, is, that *Nehemiah* ſets himſelf to immediate juſtice upon thoſe that were guilty, and a relief to them that gave in their complaints. He calls them together, ſhews the vileneſs of the practice, and though he could

(p) 1 Kings xx. 42.
(q) 1 Kings xx. 1.
(r) 1 Kings xx. 2, 3, 4, 5.

could have little hopes of fixing his arguments upon any principles of truth and honour, yet he does what he can with the groſſer paſſions of fear and ſhame. The ſeveral methods that he took with them, and the promiſe that he extorted from them, I ſhall open afterwards, and will now only take notice, that he cloſed his endeavours with a ſolemn curſe upon thoſe that proved deceitful; *Alſo I ſhook my lap, and ſaid, So God ſhake out every man from his houſe and from his labour, that performs not his promiſe, even thus be he ſhaken out and emptied:* and this was ſo good a day's work, that *all the congregation ſaid* Amen, *and praiſed the Lord.*

By theſe reflections upon the hiſtory, you will be able to ſee your own concern in it, that here was a glorious cauſe, divine and heavenly in all its parts; Religion ſecured, and liberty reſtored, and yet it had like to have been ſapped and undone by the very people who were ſharers in it, and profeſſed themſelves to be friends to it. That the danger they brought upon it was an indulgence to enemies by private uſuries, and coldneſs to their hearty friends, and that ſuch a wicked and fooliſh conduct would certainly have defeated the great ſalvation, had not God raiſed them up a *man* of ſuch a ſpirit as made him every way qualified to *ſeek the welfare of Iſrael:* things were become ſo deſperate, that *Nehemiah* ſeems to be the only perſon who was able to give a remedy. I ſhall reduce the whole ſtate of their caſe to theſe ſix heads, which are all of them ſo many doctrines or maxims upon the hiſtory before you; and as I deſpair of having time enough for a diſtinct application at the end, I will comprehend it in the ſeveral particulars as we go along.

1. It is an abuſe of the divine Goodneſs in the deliverance of a people, when the bleſſing is not made extenſive to all who are concerned in it.

2. It is an aggravation of this injury, when it is done

done by thoſe who are engaged in the ſame cauſe with the very people that ſuffer. This was the caſe of the *Jews*, the cry of the men and their wives was againſt their brethren.

3. Theſe diſorders muſt be redreſſed, if we expect a return of the divine Mercy. You ſee it was the firſt thing that *Nehemiah* did, and that ſuch a caſe is not deſperate, I will ſhew you both from the fitneſs and the ſucceſs of the methods that he took.

4. It is a mighty inſtance of God's favour to a people thus abuſed, when he ſets over them a Governor who is touched with a ſenſe of their miſeries.

5. The vengeance of heaven will come down upon thoſe who do not fall in with the noble meaſures that ſuch a prince recommends; for I take *Nehemiah*'s curſe, as it was founded upon juſtice, to have in it the value of a prophecy. *I ſhook my lap, and ſaid, So God ſhake out every man from his houſe and from his labour that performs not this promiſe, even ſo be he ſhaken out and emptied.*

6. Whenever things are thus managed, it diffuſes through the people both the argument and the ſpirit of a *thankſgiving-day*; as theſe propoſals aroſe from God's grace in *Nehemiah*'s heart, ſo they took them to be the preſages of God's favour to his government, this made all the congregation ſay, *Amen*, and praiſe the Lord.

1. One doctrine that you may collect from this remarkable ſtory, is, that people abuſe the divine Goodneſs in their Deliverance, when the bleſſing is not made extenſive to all that are concerned in it. This obſervation is placed in ſuch univerſal evidence, that all men admit it into their opinion, though they ſeldom heed it in their practiſe. In a time of danger we underſtand a general intereſt. Every one is called in to take a part in the ſtruggles that we make for liberty. *Cyrus* united all the *Jews* in his proclamation, he gave them equal leave to do their utmoſt in

ſo

ſo good a deſign; and they were alſo united in the zeal that came from above. *Every one whoſe ſpirit God raiſed to go up* (*s*), entered into the work without making any private articles; and yet when the toil was a little over, ſome of them acted as if they thought that Providence was not a public friend, but only a ſort of a factor to a few private families. Now this is abominable: becauſe,

1. They were all equal in God's regard, being *the work of his hands.*

2. They were ſo to one another as brethren.

3. They had been ſo to the cauſe, as fellow-labourers.

1. It is a miſrepreſentation of him who gives us the mercy, if we do not make it extenſive. *He accepts not the perſons of princes, nor regards the rich more than the poor, for they are all the work of his hands* (*t*). Though he hath given ſome a ſituation above their brethren, yet we cannot imagine that it is purely for their own ſakes. You muſt not think he is ſo laviſh of his bounty to the great men of the earth, meerly that they may glitter upon a throne, but be *his miniſters for good*; and this they cannot be, if they reſolve to confine their influence. Princes love to be called God's Repreſentatives, but they uſually underſtand it in no other attribute than his power, whereas that is incommunicable; it is a *glory* that he never *gives to another.* The chief titles in which he would be repreſented by them, are thoſe of juſtice and mercy: the power of doing harm never belongs to his vicegerent, becauſe it never was in himſelf. He is abſolute, but he is ſo upon the foundations of equity, as well as greatneſs. He can no more defile his throne, than he can loſe it. It is as impoſſible for his adminiſtration to be condemned, as it is to be reſiſted: he does according to his will; but that will is always holy, juſt, and good; and, when he *pulls down*

(*s*) Ezra i. 5. (*t*) Job xxxiv. 19.

down one and sets up another, if they are to represent him, this is the perfection that they ought to copy: but one would think by the inequality of human conduct, that some people will scarce allow others to be creatures; as if they thought Providence does its wonders meerly to raise a family, or maintain the humour of a party: against this we may argue as the Apostle does, "Is he the God of the *Jews* only, and not of the *Gentiles?* Yes, of the *Gentiles* also." The bounties of nature are unconfined; *their line is gone throughout the earth* (*u*): the sun takes his circuit through the whole heavens, and *there is nothing hid from the heat thereof:* and are the blessings that he gives out of the common way to be more a property than the other? It is no wonder that he ruins a mercy in the hands of those that only use it as a monopoly.

2. The unfairness of this management in the *Jews*, does farther appear in that they were all brethren. To have talked of any qualifications that arise from different opinions, would have been entertained at first as a reproach both upon the work and the people: it was enough if they could but *prove their genealogy that they were of* Israel. If they had no varieties among them about the worship of God, it must arise from one of these things; either that they had a more perfect rule to go by than we have, which is making *Christ* less *faithful in his house* than *Moses* was (*x*): or that if men would add to the rule that God had framed, all the people would run in with it, which is as unaccountable to reason, as the former is to Scripture. In the following ages we know with how much value they received *the traditions of the fathers, so as to make the command of God of no effect* (*y*): now if any of them went this length in *Nehemiah*'s time, we may suppose there were some who would keep to the *law and to the testimony:* but they are equally included in

(*u*) Psalm xix. 4, 6.
(*x*) Heb. xxi.
(*y*) Matt. xv. 6.

in this great ſalvation. The general mercy that GOD had beſtowed, was not given to feed a diſtinction among themſelves: the bleſſing that regarded them as *Jews*, muſt not be made a perquiſite to a ſect or faction. Are people delivered from a common ruin that they may ſtill indulge the folly of a lower quarrel? Does GOD tear you from a bondage to a foreign enemy, on purpoſe to incourage a domeſtic perſecution? Will you make terms for his Providence, as you do for his Grace? If *your* hands are cloſed to your brethren, ſhall *his* be ſo too? Are they to have no ſhare in what he does? Allow him to diſpoſe of his bounty as he pleaſeth, and to do according to what he ſaith in the parable; *I do thee no wrong, take that which is thine and go thy way; I will give unto this laſt, even as unto thee; Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil becauſe that I am good* (*z*)?

You will eaſily ſee by all this, how ill they are dealt with who are caſt out from the privileges of a nation where they live, and neither uſed as *Britons*, nor as *Proteſtants*. When they hear *ſongs from the uttermoſt parts of the earth, ſaying, Glory to the righteous, they may cry out, My leanneſs, my leanneſs, the treacherous dealers have dealt treacherouſly* (*a*). Till the foundation is made wider, and men regarded rather for the merit of their actions than for the cant and cringe of a party, we are both ſullying GOD's work, and abuſeing his people. Nor is this out of the caſe of our preſent thankſgiving: we do not come to rejoice that GOD hath brought one amongſt us who bears *the name of a King*. It is a poor charm that goes along with the ſound of that title. It does not always ſignify either wiſdom or goodneſs. But the mercy is this, that he hath given us one who is touched with a ſenſe of our danger, and full of that principle which alone can ſecure our happineſs: and of this we have an early proof in the noble declaration that he made in council: 'that

(*z*) Matt. xx. 13, 14. | (*a*) Iſa. xxiv. 16.

'that it was his purpoſe to do all that is in his power 'for the ſupporting and maintaining the churches of 'England and Scotland, as they are ſeverally by law 'eſtabliſhed, and that his opinion was, this might 'be effectually done without the leaſt impairing the 'Toleration allowed by law to Proteſtant Diſſenters, 'ſo agreeable to Chriſtian charity, and ſo neceſſary 'to the trade and riches of this kingdom: and, as 'the good effects of making property ſecure, are no 'where ſo clearly ſeen, and to ſo great a degree as in 'this happy kingdom, ſo he aſſures us, there is not 'any that ſhall more earneſtly endeavour the preſer-'vation of it than himſelf *.' You have the more reaſon to obſerve this, when you remember how lately ſome were pulling all ſorts of miſery upon you; tho' they could not go through their deſign to beggar you by *the Bill of Commerce*, yet they have laid the ſcheme of another plunder, by denying you the education of your children: as if great ignorance was the beſt way to *prevent ſchiſm*. The Papiſts tell us, that it is the mother of devotion, and others would make it the bond of uniformity: ſo that you ſee one door of ruin is ſtill open, for we learn by the Prophet, that people are not only *deſtroyed* for lack of *trade*, but *for lack of knowledge*.

But behold the goodneſs of GOD! it is obſerved by the ſacred hiſtorians, that the happineſs of *Iſrael* bore date with an edict of this nature: *There aroſe a King that knew not Joſeph, the ſame did evil intreat our fathers, and caſt out their young children, to the intent that they might not live, at which time Moſes was born* (*b*): and by the ſame rule, I cannot but obſerve to you, that his preſent Majeſty began his *life* one day before that reign in which your fathers were made *Diſſenters* †; and he began his *government* the ſame day that your children were to be made *Ideots* ‖: *may the*

* Sept. 22, 1714.
(*b*) Acts vii. 18, 19, 20.
† May 28, 1660.
‖ Auguſt 1, 1714.

the bleſſing of thoſe that were ready to periſh come upon him: may he have the glory as he hath the inclination to be a *healer of our breaches, and a reſtorer of paths to dwell in:* that as GOD hath given him the *hearts*, he may in his Providence give him the *ſervice* of thoſe who want more room to be uſeful; that in his days there may be an end of all ſuch eſtabliſhments as pinch the throne and grieve the conſcience; plunder the prince of the help that he may have, and prevent the ſubjects of a duty that they would pay: that the chains of incapacity may be taken off from yourſelves, and thoſe of ignorance from your poſterity: thus his name will be dear to the preſent age, and *the children yet unborn will riſe up and call him bleſſed.*

3. There is another reaſon why the mercies of a Deliverance ſhould be thus extended, becauſe the people had been equal in their concern for a general intereſt. It is not fair that ſweat and blood ſhould paſs for nothing. *Rejoice ye with Jeruſalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her: rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her (c).* It was ſo in the ſtory of *Nehemiah*; the poorer ſort, who were brought ſo low, had taken as much pains in building the temple and the city, as their brethren, who run away with the main ſhares of the bleſſing. It is true, GOD condemned the *Gibeonites* to be *hewers of wood and drawers of water*; but he never ſuffered one party of *Iſrael* to uſe another at that rate. A little before this complaint, there was work enough for all hands, when they were ready to ſink under the noiſe of enemies, and the weight of ſervice: *Judah ſaid, The ſtrength of the bearers of burdens is decayed, and there is much rubbiſh, ſo that we are not able to build the wall (d):* and when the adverſary threatned to pour in forces upon them from every quarter, *Nehemiah ſet the people after their families, with their ſwords, their ſpears, and*

(c) Iſa. lxvi. 10. (d) Neh. iv. 10.

and their bows (*e*). Where would have been the policy of diſqualifying any number of theſe, when they were all little enough? No, *Zion* then was not *built with blood, nor Jeruſalem with iniquity.* He engageth them all, without any diſtinction, and argues upon the common topics of Religion and Liberty: *I ſaid to the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the reſt of the people, Be ye not afraid of them; remember the Lord, who is great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your ſons, and your daughters, and your wives, and your houſes* (*f*). It would have given them but a dull proſpect had they known beforehand what they felt afterwards, that all their hazards was but to make others rich, and keep themſelves poor. But they had no ſuch view; they knew it to be a principle of univerſal nature, that every thing ſhall ſubſiſt upon his own ſervice: the creature that works muſt feed. *Who goes a warfare at any time at his own charges? Who plants a vineyard, and eats not of the fruit thereof? Or who feeds a flock, and eats not of the milk of the flock? Say I theſe things, or ſaith the law the ſame alſo? For it is written in the law of Moſes, Thou ſhalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn* (*g*). *Does God take care for oxen?* Is that all his deſign to eſtabliſh a privilege for cattle? Or *ſaith he it altogether for our ſakes? For our ſakes, no doubt, this is written, That he that plows ſhould plow in hope, and he that threſheth in hope ſhould be partaker of his hope*; that another may not run away with all he hath been taking pains for.

Not but that every good man acts upon higher ends than an advantage in this life. He hath the comfort *Nehemiah* ſo often rolled himſelf in, of commending his ſoul to that God whoſe cauſe had inflamed his zeal, and led on his dangers. *Remember me, O Lord, according to the multitude of thy mercies:* and

(*e*) Neh. iv. 13.
(*f*) Neh. iv. 14.
(*g*) 1 Cor. ix. 7, 8, 9, 10.

and certainly, we ought to imploy a ſevere ſuſpicion upon a temper that makes us uneaſy at any good we have done: it is apt to riſe in an honeſt heart, and therefore we are warned againſt it: *Do you think that the Scripture ſaith in vain, The ſpirit that dwelleth in us luſteth to envy (h)?* No, it is not in vain, we all of us need that caution, and the more we have an eye to *the recompence of reward*, the greater ſerenity will it draw down upon the mind: as the cauſe is good, ſo is the maſter who hath inſtamped his name upon it. It is an honour that he will help us to *do* any thing for his people; it is a greater if we are called to *ſuffer:* however, it is to be wiſhed, that human affairs were conducted with more equity; that men who are indifferent to *any* party, may not be gainers by *all*; and that thoſe perſons whoſe lives were *not dear to themſelves*, may find they are dear to their friends; for it will ever have an unkindly aſpect, that ſuch people ſhould not be owned as *ſervants* to an intereſt, who were ſure of being *martyrs* for it.

II. Another maxim that you may collect from the ſtory of the *Jews* in this book, is, that it is an aggravation of the injury done to thoſe who are no better for the public mercy, when the guilt of uſing them thus, lies upon ſome who are engaged in the ſame cauſe with them. This was indeed a pungent article in the caſe that my text refers to; the people who in the former chapter had no imaginations of danger, but what came from the enemy, turned the next cry againſt *their brethren the Jews*. Some of theſe had made an advantage of the common hardſhips that the reſt lay under; they lent them money upon extravagant uſury, taking *the hundredth part of it from them*, which is what we call twelve *per cent.* and they had ſo little mercy for thoſe that were thus ſtraitened, that ſome of theſe borrowers were forced to *mortgage their lands*, and others of them to ſell, or

(*h*) James iv. 5.

at leaſt, to pawn their children. Now the vileneſs of ſuch uſage appears in three things.

1. It ſhewed a groſs want of all Religion.

2. It drew down a reproach upon the cauſe itſelf.

3. This ſeverity to their brethren was attended with a ſcandalous clemency to the enemy.

1. Such a way of dealing with God's people after the common Deliverance he had given them, was a notorious argument how little Religion had to do in theſe mens hearts. Though they were but lately in bondage, and *by the rivers of Babylon* dropping a tear upon every thought of *Sion* (*i*), yet from that ſoftneſs they became inſenſible to the groans of miſery. Theſe very perſons had but newly catched at an opportunity that the proclamation gave them to build the city and the temple, and the thick cloud that hung over them all the while they were doing it, one would have thought ſhould have kept them ſerious; and yet you ſee that *Nehemiah* argues upon the infidelity and atheiſm of ſuch a practice. *It is not good that ye do; ought ye not to walk in the fear of the Lord our God* (*k*)? In which reproof, he ſhews them that the fear of God extends itſelf farther than meer devotion. It was not rearing the temple; it is not building of churches that will protect a people in the neglect of their brethren; for *by mercy and truth iniquity is purged, and by the fear of the Lord men depart from evil* (*l*). It is not belonging to a good ſociety or running out in a zeal for it, that will anſwer the end of Religion. *The wiſdom that deſcends from above is full of mercy and good fruits* (*m*). The people guilty of theſe abominations, were of the pureſt church then in the world, and had lately ſhewn a regard to their peculiar; and yet they are doing that which is ſcandalous to all the profeſſions of piety.

2. This courſe was enough to draw in a diſgrace upon

(*i*) Pſalm cxxxvii. 1, 2.
(*k*) Neh. v. 9.
(*l*) Prov. xvi. 6.
(*m*) James iii. 17.

upon the cauſe itſelf, as *Nehemiah* tells them, we ought to *walk in the fear of the Lord our God, becauſe of the reproach of the Heathen our enemies* (*n*). He was always afraid of any thing that might give the *Perſians* a handle to think with a contempt of their Religion. *Ezra* had rather run the hazard of his life, than of the reputation that ought to be maintained upon the intereſt of GOD: *I was aſhamed to require of the King a band of ſoldiers, and of horſemen, to help us againſt the enemy in the way, becauſe we had ſpoken to the King, ſaying, The hand of our God is upon all them for good that ſeek him, but his power and his wrath is againſt all them that forſake him* (*o*). He durſt not beg for a common protection, leſt it had looked like a diffidence of the promiſes; but if want of faith is a ſcandal to any cauſe, I am ſure want of charity will be more ſo. What a jeſt would the enemy make of all the pretences the *Jews* had, either upon the head of Religion or Liberty? Theſe men that would not take a devotion of our forming, will have a morality of their own: they hate one ſort of *idolatry*, but they love *covetouſneſs*, which is really another: and with what pretence can they talk of freedom to us, when they deny it to their brethren? When the *Jews* went into captivity, they were received with a general ſcorn, they had not the uſual pity that is given to priſoners of war, but were by every one looked upon as a vile and wretched nation, *When they entered unto the Heathen, whither they went, they profaned my holy name, when they ſaid unto them, Theſe are the people of the Lord, and are gone forth out of his land; but I had pity for my holy name, which the houſe of Iſrael had profaned whither they went* (*p*); and now they are doing the ſame thing in their return from captivity, which was enough to make the people that converſed with them think that *Religion*, the

(*n*) Neh. v. 9.
(*o*) Ezra viii. 22.
(*p*) Ezek. xxxvi. 20, 21.

rights of mankind, *liberty* and *property*, were only muſical ſounds to leave a delightful touch upon the ear, and then be gone for ever. *Nehemiah* knew that their conſtitution was but young and tender, and there were enemies on every ſide to make an advantage of the leaſt error; and could a ſtory of this nature be carried to King *Darius*, that the rulers and nobles among the *Jews* were inſatiable in their avarice, and the common people more ſlaves to them than they had been to him, he would have recalled his decree: or, if by the laws of the country he could not do that, he might let looſe thoſe ravening enemies upon them, who wanted no more than leave to ſwallow them up; and indeed, if this was the caſe, the poor people had better have gone back again, they had a ſeverer bondage in *Canaan* than they had in *Babylon*.

And ſo it is in our day, equal juſtice, public rights, freedom of conſcience, and ſecure property, are what all mankind both underſtand and admire; nor would ever any claims for theſe have been called treaſon, if the people that uſed the words had been true to the thing: but when perſons begin to plunder thoſe whom they once protected, whatever *they* ſay upon the head of liberty and privilege paſſeth for nothing: the cauſe looks ſcandalous as it comes out of their lips. *The kingdom of God*, take it both in a divine and a political ſenſe, does not conſiſt in trifling diſtinctions and badges of a party, but in *righteouſneſs*, *peace and joy*; *and he that in theſe things ſerveth Chriſt is acceptable to God, and will be approved of man* (*q*): ſuch a generous and unbiaſſed engagement in the cauſe of a nation will make its way to every one's conſcience; but it is at the breach of this integrity that thoſe profane noiſes come in which our ears have heard. Perſons would lay the title of God upon the luſts of men, and call thoſe the Lord's anointed who were his greateſt enemies, making our Religion the

(*q*) Rom. xiv. 16, 17.

the property of an Atheiſt, and our liberties the morſel of a Tyrant.

3. Theſe *Jews* that were ſo very ſevere to their brethren run into another practice equally ſcandalous, and that is an unrighteous clemency to their enemies. One would think the beſt paſſion left in human nature ſince the fall, is that of pity; and yet even this makes ſad work in the conduct of a covetous man, he denies it where it is due, and he throws it away in the moſt laviſh manner where it will pervert public juſtice: now this unevenneſs of temper, that a man ſhall be all mildneſs to ſome, and cruel to others, flows from a vicious love of himſelf; he conſiders no equity, but only *what he can get* from his friends by ſqueezing them, and from his enemies by ſparing them: and this crime had ſtole into the hearts of thoſe who once *ſtrengthened their hands for the good work* that *Nehemiah* came about. The firſt man that we meet with in the liſt of builders, was *Eliaſhib the high-prieſt* (*r*): he is placed there either for the dignity of his office, or the earlineſs of his zeal, and yet he *having overſight over the chambers of the houſe of God, was allied unto Tobiah* (*s*), either by a marriage, which was ſo often forbid in their law, or by ſome uncommon degree of friendſhip. Now there was not a viler enemy that the *Jews* had; he was originally an *Ammonite*, one of the curſed race, concerning whom God had given orders that they *ſhould not come into the congregation of the Lord for ever* (*t*). And beſides, the firſt time we read of him he is called a *ſervant* (*u*), as if he was of a mean and deſpicable family; and owed his riſe to ſome groſs and lowly drudgery to the luſt of his maſter. This wretch had made a *jeſt* of their cauſe, and when he could not oppoſe them by open violence, did it by *ſneering*. It is he that ſaid thoſe cutting words, *Even that which they build, if a fox*

(*r*) Neh. iii. 1.
(*s*) Neh. xiii. 4.
(*t*) Neh xiii. 1.
(*u*) Neh. ii. 10.

go up he ſhall break down their ſtone walls (*x*): and yet to that exceſs did the high-prieſt carry his regard for this man, that he prepared for him the *treaſure-chamber in the temple, where they uſed to lay the meat-offering and the frankincenſe, and the veſſels, and the tithes of the corn, the new wine, and the oil, (which was commanded to be given to the Levites, and the ſingers, and the porters) and the offerings of the prieſts* (*y*). So that here is the houſe of GOD polluted, and his ſervants ſtarved, meerly to gratify one who had no other merit than being the high-prieſt's relation.

Such things as theſe will always entangle the public cauſe. This *Eliaſhib* acted far beneath the ſpirit of his anceſtors, of whom it is remembered, in their zeal for GOD, that *he ſaid unto his father and his mother, I have not ſeen him; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew his own children* (*z*); but this man *defiled the prieſthood, and had corrupted the covenant of Levi* (*a*). *Nehemiah* found it very hard to puſh on his deſigns through the ſnares that *Tobiah* laid for him: the oppoſition that he made to their work was public enough; he would needs have come at the head of an army to *fight againſt Jeruſalem, and hinder it* (*b*); and yet though the people had been watching, and working, and praying, in a great deal of fear, becauſe of this man; no ſooner was their danger over, but he who had been their terror, becomes their darling; he forms a numerous party againſt *Nehemiah* himſelf: one would think it impoſſible, that a man who had ſo often deceived, ſhould ſtill have it in his power to perſuade; and yet you ſee he hath ways to get *a prophet of the Lord* (*c*) on his ſide; who under a pretence of friendſhip would have had the governor done a thing cowardly and profane. It is ſtrange, that bribery ſhould have ſuch a force, that

(*x*) Neh. iv. 3.
(*y*) Neh. xiii. 5.
(*z*) Deut. xxxiii. 9.
(*a*) Neh. xiii. 29.
(*b*) Neh. iv. 8.
(*c*) Neh. vi. 10.

that a man of a holy character ſhall be prevailed upon to delude a perſon that had ventured his life for them, and put him upon doing a thing which would have ruined their whole national cauſe; nay, and more than that, for a ſum of money he will both betray his Prince, and belie his GOD; for this was the caſe: *Lo, I perceived God had not ſent him, but that he pronounced this prophecy againſt me; for Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him, therefore was he hired, that I ſhould be afraid, and do ſo, and ſin, and that they might have matter for an evil report, that they might reproach me* (*d*). And what a cabal there was to form this plot, you ſee in his prayer; *O my God, think thou upon Tobiah and Sanballat, according to their works; and on the propheteſs Noadiah, and the reſt of the prophets, that would have put me in fear* (*e*). Nor did this public enemy ſtick at corrupting the *Levites*, but he wrought himſelf into the good eſteem of the quality, they held a traiterous correſpondence with him, and both by his own and his ſon's marriage into their families, they ſet him up for a man of merit. Strange infatuation! they do this on purpoſe to ſhake the preſent government, betraying *Nehemiah*'s counſels, and weakning his hands. *In thoſe days the nobles of Judah ſent letters to Tobiah, and the letters of Tobiah came unto them, for there were many in Judah ſworn unto him; becauſe he was the ſon-in-law of Shecaniah, the ſon of Arah, and his ſon Johanan had taken the daughter of Meſhullam, the ſon of Berechiah: alſo they reported his good deeds before me, and uttered my words to him, and Tobiah ſent letters to put me in fear* (*f*). What a wonder is it that a cauſe ſo intangled, ſhould ever proſper! but nothing is too hard for GOD; he that *forms the ſpirit of man within him* (*g*), can give his ſervants a ſoul equal to the burden and

(*d*) Neh. vi. 12, 13.
(*e*) Ver. 14.
(*f*) Neh vi 17, 18, 19.
(*g*) Zech. xii. 1.

heat of the day. *Nehemiah* often puts up that prayer, *O God, ſtrengthen my hands.*

When any devote themſelves to the intereſt of a people, they muſt look for ſuch difficulties as theſe are; when men ſhew no mercy to their brethren, that paſſion is like the tide which runs with an inequality, in ſome caſes flows as much too high, as in others it is too low: as ſoon as ever you find that they *mind their own things*, you may expect they will break all the rules both of diſtributive and penal juſtice: and of this his Majeſty hath expreſſed a royal ſenſe in his laſt proclamation for calling a new Parliament: I cannot forbear reading you ſome paſſages out of it, that as you muſt have obſerved he hath very much of *Nehemiah's troubles*, you may with pleaſure ſee he is acted by *his ſpirit*. He owns thoſe 'remarkable ſteps of 'Providence that brought him in ſafety to the crown 'of theſe kingdoms, notwithſtanding the deſigns of 'evil men, who ſhewed themſelves diſaffected to the 'ſucceſſion.' He takes notice, that 'they have ſince 'with the utmoſt degree of malice miſrepreſented 'him, and attempted by many falſe ſuggeſtions to 'render him ſuſpected to his people:' he is aware of the danger theſe meaſures muſt involve us in, and for this reaſon, 'that the miſcarriages of others may not 'be imputed to him, he ſignifies to the whole king-'dom the concern he had on his acceſſion to the crown 'to find the public affairs under the greateſt difficul-'ties: and that he was ſurprized to obſerve, that 'the debts of the nation were very much increaſed 'ſince the concluſion of the laſt war.' And truly this is a matter ſo obvious and eaſy to be known, that we muſt think *the hearts of people are very groſs*, who either have not diſcovered it, or would not reſent it. There was one year's tax to pay an army for not fighting: you had leſs charge to maintain the generals who were *a terror to evil doers*, than ſome *negative heroes* that *bore the ſword in vain:* and even ſince thoſe ſham campaigns

campaigns are at an end, any one who reads over the public accounts will find, that there hath been more gold laid out in laccaring the peace, than was needful to have fed the war.

And ſhall our eyes turn again to ſuch as made themſelves rich with the ſale and ſpoils of their country? If you were to be *their* victims, they ſhould be *yours*; ſhall any ſo far impoſe upon you as to ſay of meer *golden calves*, *Theſe are thy gods*, *O Iſrael*, *that brought thee out of Egypt?* This you know proved the blaſt of the *Revolution:* it gave life to the faction that was ſtunned before, and made the ſame people a ſecond time dare to undo you: It is ſeldom that you find any ſuch thing as political reformation, as if men that have entered into the deſigns of ſelling their country, were given up to *a heart that cannot repent:* mercy to ſuch, is a contempt of the groans you hear at preſent, and a preparation for more to come. We found it ſo in King *William*'s reign: the Act of Indemnity unchained the beaſts of prey, and let them do their old miſchief over again: men came into places with the blood of your *murdered patriots* upon them; and what did they do there, but continually clog the wheel that ought to have cruſhed them? They forced the King into a peace, and then quarreled with him for making it. Though the hand of God is eminently ſeen in theſe things; for if either princes or people will *truſt in vanity*, *vanity ſhall be their recompence* (*b*). An enmity to your conſtitution is ſtill the ſame, tho' it appears in different forms: the Partition-Treaty, you know, was arraigned, and the arguments againſt it taken from the danger, that giving ſo much power to *France*, would bring upon our Religion and Liberties; and yet the ſame hand that carried up an impeachment for their having part of *Spain*, hath ſigned the inſtrument that gives them the whole. Theſe are things ſo dangerous, that his Majeſty in the proclamation

(*b*) Job xv. 31.

clamation I have already quoted, recommends to you the choice of ſuch perſons for the next Parliament, as will 'redreſs the preſent diſorders, and provide for 'the peace and happineſs of theſe kingdoms.' We muſt look for the ſpring of theſe noble reſolutions where *Ezra* did: *Bleſſed be the Lord God of our fathers, who hath put ſuch a thing as this into the King's heart* (*i*).

(*i*) Ezra vii. 27.

SERMON

SERMON XVII.

THE third observation from the history before you, that these disorders must be redressed, if we expect a return of the divine mercy. I have hinted already at the necessity of this, that it was *rolling away their reproach*, a keeping up a sacred unity to their own profession; turning their words into life and realities, and so *cutting off occasion from them that desired occasion* (*a*). The argument that the Apostle useth to a Church will have the same weight in the State: *Ye do wrong and defraud, and that your brethren; know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God* (*b*)? These things are both a scandal to any interest, and like a moth they eat into it. *Mercy and truth preserve the King, and his throne is upheld by mercy* (*c*): but it never either can or will be so in the reverse to this; GOD is offended, his people are insecure: the very *Gibeonites* themselves, though they were condemned to a perpetual bondage, yet having been injured, are desired to *bless the inheritance of the Lord*, which they could not do till Justice was done upon *the man that consumed them, and who had devised against them, that they should be destroyed from remaining in any of the courts of Israel* (*d*). This is both a divine and human article in our Deliverance: GOD requires it, that *judgment should return unto righteousness*; and men expect it,

(*a*) 2 Cor. xi. 12.
(*b*) 1 Cor. vi. 8, 9.
(*c*) Prov. xx. 28.
(*d*) 2 Sam. xxi. 5.

it, that *all the upright in heart may follow after* (*e*). He mentions that as a thing by which he will complete the happiness of his people. *They shall dwell in their land, and build houses, and plant vineyards; yea, they shall dwell with confidence, when I have executed judgment upon all that despise them round about, and they shall know that I am the Lord their God* (*f*). But I need carry this argument no farther in shewing that a redress is needful; I will rather give my thoughts another turn, in letting you see that it is possible: the case is very dangerous, but it is not desperate: there is a gracious God, who takes part with them that own his interest. *Nehemiah* puts all the success of his government upon this; when he discovered a plot, or when he did any thing great and noble, it was still *according to the good hand of his God upon him*; you see he does not give over, though new troubles sprung up so fast. His administration was a chain of toils, scarce any part of it could be called easy, but as God had sent him to the work, he furnished him with a greatness of soul for it. You see the methods that he took, and they will seldom fail of an equal success.

1. He *set an assembly against them* to put them in fear.

2. He argued with them to put them to shame.

3. He took a *promise* and an *oath* of them to keep them steddy.

1. He entred into the most proper methods to put them into fear: this is the first passion you can work upon in a wicked man, because as for shame, in many cases they are past it; and therefore *Nehemiah* begun at the right end of the cure, engaging a popular disdain of those who had done so many public injuries. *They that sin are to be rebuked before all, that others also may fear* (*g*). Not in those gentle and softer ways that will make impression enough upon modesty; but according

(*e*) Psal. xciv. 15.
(*f*) Ezek. xxviii. 26.
(*g*) 1 Tim. v. 20.

according to the degree of their guilt and the brawniness of the sinner; for *a reproof will enter more into a wise man, than an hundred stripes into a fool* (*h*). I am not certain that by this great assembly which *Nehemiah* set against them, may not be meant their grand council that is usually called the Sanhedrim, which answers to our Parliament; though there are so many disputes about the first Institution of that Court. Whether it was as old as *Moses*, or bears a later date, that I will not deliver it as an opinion: however his setting this *assembly against them*, must be either understood of such a representative body, or of the whole people in general; and in either of these cases, there was a certain view of Justice: not but that the grand council of a nation may be corrupted, and screen the villain that they ought to pursue. It is against these that the Psalmist argues. *God stands in the congregation of the mighty, he judgeth among the gods: How long will you judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked? Deliver the poor and needy; rid them out of the hand of the wicked: They know not, neither will they understand: All the foundations of the earth are out of course* (*i*). And it is an observation that *Solomon* made, *I saw under the sun the place of judgment, that wickedness was there; and the place of righteousness, that inquity was there* (*k*). The *wicked* in a body, as well as in a single person, *bless the covetous whom the Lord abhors* (*l*): but when it is so, if God hath any mercy in store for a land, *he weighs a path for his anger; though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not go unpunished*, that *the seed of the righteous may be delivered* (*m*): *If thou seest the oppression of the poor, and the violent perverting of judgment and justice in a province, marvel not at the matter, for he that is higher than the highest regards it, and there be higher than they* (*n*).

It

(*h*) Prov. xvii. 10.
(*i*) Psal. lxxxii. 1, 2, 4, 5.
(*k*) Eccles. iii. 16.
(*l*) Psal. x. 3.
(*m*) Prov. xi. 21.
(*n*) Eccles. v. 8.

It is no ſuch rarity for a great man to be ſure of carrying his point againſt the cry of innocence: *Job* ſpeaks of this, though he durſt not uſe it: *If I have lifted up my hand againſt the fatherleſs, when I ſaw my help in the gate, then let mine arm fall from my ſhoulder-blade, and be broken from the bone* (*o*): this is what he blamed in others; *He will ſurely reprove you, if you do ſecretly accept perſons* (*p*).

But when God ſtirreth up in a people the ſame tenderneſs for the public that they have for their own concerns, then ſhall *judgment run down our ſtreets like a river, and equity as a mighty ſtream:* for in that caſe it will be found that *jealouſy is the rage of a man, therefore he will not ſpare in the day of vengeance: he will not regard any ranſom, neither will he reſt contented, though thou giveſt many gifts* (*q*). It is ſuch a ſpirit as this, that God will pour out upon his ſervants when *great Babylon comes in remembrance before him: reward her as ſhe hath rewarded you: double unto her double, in the cup which ſhe hath filled, fill to her double* (*r*): ſuch a Juſtice as this will be an emblem of thoſe glorious diſtributions that are given in an higher way. When *an angel comes down from heaven, having the key of the bottomleſs-pit, and a great chain in his hand; and lays hold on the Dragon, that old Sepent, who is the Devil and Satan, and ſhuts him up, and ſets a ſeal upon him, that he ſhall deceive the nations no more* (*s*). The Prince who hath *ſet his heart* to the Law, and to the Houſe of God, need not deſpair even in a time of great corruption. *Nehemiah* had as much reaſon for diffidence as the Pſalmiſt, when he ſaid, *Who will riſe up for me againſt the evil-doers, who will ſtand up for me againſt the workers of iniquity* (*t*)? For if the rich men were all in the crime, and the poor all in the danger, the one would not vouchſafe to hear, as the other

(*o*) Job xxxi. 20, 22.
(*p*) Job xiii. 10.
(*q*) Prov. vi. 34, 35.
(*r*) Rev. xviii. 6.
(*s*) Rev. xx. 1, 2, 3.
(*t*) Pſal. xciv. 16.

other would not dare to ſpeak: but he ventures that, and finds a *great aſſembly* that will join with him in wiping off the public ſcandal.

2. Having made himſelf ſure of a good number on his ſide, he puts them to ſhame; and there is all the force that argument can have, as he reaſons with them: he ſheweth them, *Firſt*, That it is expreſly againſt a divine command: *I conſulted with myſelf, and I rebuked the Nobles and the Rulers, and ſaid unto them, Ye exact uſury every one of his brother* (*u*); the very thing that GOD had forbid. And, *Secondly*, That it is running back from the zeal that they had already ſhewn, and the ſucceſs that GOD had honoured them with. *We, after our ability, have redeemed our brethren the Jews, that were ſold unto the Heathen, and will ye even ſell your brethren* (*x*)*?* Nay, *Thirdly*, That it puts themſelves into the character and crime of tyrants; *Shall they be ſold unto us?* Shall we bring the ſpirit of *Babylon* into the land of *Canaan*, and be as vile to one another as the Heathen were to us all? *Fourthly*, He inſinuates that others, beſides them, could have made the ſame advantage. *I likewiſe with my brethren and my ſervants, might exact of them money and corn* (*y*)*:* And, *Fifthly*, He joins the ſweetneſs of an importunity with the gravity of a command. *I pray you let us leave off this uſury; reſtore, I pray you, unto them, even this day, their lands, their vineyards, and their olive-yards, and their houſes, and the hundredth part of their money, of the corn, of the wine, and of the oil that ye exact of them* (*z*). Now I know you will expect to hear the ſucceſs of theſe honeſt endeavours; and it was as much as he could wiſh, and a great deal more than he could hope for: his argument confounds them, *They held their peace, and find nothing to anſwer* (*a*), his directions move them; then ſaid

(*u*) Neh. v. 7.
(*x*) Neh. v. 8.
(*y*) Neh. v. 10.
(*z*) Neh. v. 11.
(*a*) Neh. v. 8.

ſaid they, *We will reſtore them, and require nothing of them; ſo will we do as thou ſayeſt* (*b*): *The hearts of men*, you ſee, *are in the hands of the Lord, and he turns them as the rivers of water* (*c*).

Such a bleſſing as this upon the attempts we make, is worth all our pains and toil: any one would have thought that it was not ſafe for *Nehemiah* to run the hazard that he did, that it would but exaſperate, becauſe, it is plain, the *landed intereſt* was againſt him, and if he miſcarried in this affair, it would expoſe his government, be a handle to the public enemy, and make the burden heavier upon the poor people. Theſe are the arguments of fear and lazineſs; for cowardice generally paſſeth for prudence, as a very nice obſerver hath told us: *The ſluggard is wiſer in his own conceit, than ſeven men that can render a reaſon* (*d*). But *Nehemiah* had *put his hand to the plough*, and had he *looked back*, he could not have been *fit for that kingdom of God* (*e*), where he did theſe eminent ſervices. He knew this was as much God's cauſe that he pleaded againſt the *Jews*, as they were his battles that he fought againſt the *Ammonites*; and that he who had *ſtrengthned his hands for the war*, would be *with his mouth* and his lips, that they ſhould *not tranſgreſs in judgment*.

3. He took a promiſe from them, and had it confirmed with all the ſolemnity that was poſſible: *I called the Prieſts, and took an oath of them that they ſhould do according to this promiſe* (*f*). Perhaps he called theſe Prieſts as the chief of the criminals; for we find all along that they were a dead weight upon the good cauſe. In *Ezra*'s time, when the hand of God was heavy upon them for taking of ſtrange wives, the reformation began among the Princes, and in their complaint, they tell who had moſt of the guilt; *The Prieſts and the Levites have not ſeparated themſelves from*

(*b*) Neh. v. 12.
(*c*) Pſal. xxi. 1.
(*d*) Prov. xxvi. 16.
(*e*) Luke ix. 62.
(*f*) Neh. v. 12.

from the People of the land; though at the same time they are so ingenuous as to confess that *the hand of the Princes and the Rulers had been chief in this trespass* (*g*): and this intangled them too in *Nehemiah*'s days: he mentions a notorious case, that one of the sons of *Joiada*, the son of *Eliashib* the High Priest, was son-in-law to *Sanballat* the *Heronite*, *therefore I chased him from me.*

Or it may be, all that is here meant by his *calling the Priests* was, that they might be witnesses to the oath, that he took from the Rulers. The making of oaths common, is making them cheap, and in a little while will bring a deadness upon the conscience: but in the history before us, there were several great turns which led them into these solemnities. In *Ezra*'s time one of the people proposed, *Let us make a covenant with our God to put away all the strange wives, and those that are born of them, according to the counsel of my Lord, and of those that trembled at the commandment of our God, and let it be done according to the law* (*h*): and it is observed of the *Levites* that *they gave their hands that they would do so* (*i*). And in *Nehemiah*'s administration, after a long confession and prayer, they close it in that manner: *Because of all this we make a sure covenant, and write it, and our Princes, Levites and Priests seal to it* (*k*). You have the names of those that sealed it in the tenth chapter; and it is said of the rest, that *they clave to their brethren, their nobles, and entred into a curse, and into an oath, to walk in God's law, which was given by Moses* (*l*). This was laying it as fast upon every man's conscience as *Nehemiah* could do. And when he hath gone thus far, he only foretels and represents to them the danger of being unfaithful; *Also I shook my lap, and said, So God shake out every man from his house, and from his*

(*g*) Ezra ix. 1, 2, 3.
(*h*) Ezra x. 3.
(*i*) Ezra x. 19.
(*k*) Neh. ix. 38.
(*l*) Neh. x. 29.

labour, who performs not this promise, even thus be he shaken out and emptied.

IV. It is an eminent instance of God's favour to a people thus abused, when he sets over them a Governor who is touched with a sense of their miseries. These changes are of so much weight to the interest of his glory, that the conduct of them is committed to a Redeemer. He that comes to *save his people from their sins* has taken into his own hands both the funds of grace, and the reins of Providence. It is to the power and the goodness of a Messiah, that the Church ascribes all their Deliverance from public enemies; *Thou hast broken the yoke of his burden, the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, as in the day of Midian; for every battle of the warrior is with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood, but this shall be with burning and fuel of fire* (*m*). These words are an account of those great ways that God will take to rescue his people from the claws of tyranny. Now *the reason of the hope that was in them*, you find in the next verse; it is brought in as the grand security of what they were waiting for, *For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the Government shall be upon his shoulders* (*n*). Though his incarnation is to fetch us out of a greater danger; he was *made of a woman, and made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law* (*o*), yet it comprehends all the lower salvations that we have from the wrath of man, that *being delivered from our enemies, we might serve him without fear in holiness all our days* (*p*). For if his blood could redeem us from the law, certainly it will not leave us in a bondage that is against law.

And laying out the nature of this privilege, is *preaching Christ*. These are the *works that praise him*; and by discoursing upon them, *his Saints shall bless*

(*m*) Isai. ix. 4, 5.
(*n*) Isai. ix. 6.
(*o*) Gal. iv. 4, 5.
(*p*) Luke vii. 74.

bleſs him. They ſhall ſpeak of the glory of his kingdom, and talk of his power, to make known unto the ſons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majeſty of his kingdom. For his kingdom is an everlaſting kingdom, and his dominion endures to all generations (*q*). In the eighth chapter of the Proverbs, when he ſpeaks of himſelf under the name of Wiſdom, he does not only tell us of thoſe things that enter into the myſtery of our redemption, but of the ways that he takes to poiſe the world, and keep up an order and harmony in it. It is true we are chiefly concerned in what he ſays of his *rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth, and having his delight among the ſons of men* (*r*): but beſides that, it is from him that we have the bounties of nature, and from him the concord of Providence. It is he that *ſet a compaſs upon the face of the deep, and gave to the ſea his decree, that the waters ſhould not paſs his commandment* (*s*): and he that has guarded us from that element, has the ſame care that we ſhall not be over-run with a deluge of power and cruelty; for *by him Kings reign, and Princes decree juſtice* (*t*); *i. e.* by his grace in themſelves, or by his love to the people that are under them. When they are qualified to the honours they wear, and the charge that is upon them, it is he that *works them for the ſelf-ſame thing*. They are not by him in any other ſenſe; he does not in theſe words ſet up a court of equity to try their titles, being *not made a Judge, or a Divider over them* (*u*). He has nothing to do in raiſing up of Tyrants: Oppreſſors are *men of the earth* (*x*), and he diſclaims a ſhare in them. *They ſet up Kings, but not by me; and Princes, but I knew it not:* this was when *Iſrael had caſt off the thing that is good* (*y*). It is by his influence that the great men of the world ſhall be filled with a zeal for

(*q*) Pſal. cxlv. 10—13.
(*r*) Prov. viii. 31.
(*s*) Prov. viii. 27, 29.
(*t*) Prov. viii. 15.
(*u*) Luke xii. 14.
(*x*) Pſal. x. 18.
(*y*) Hoſ. viii. 3, 4.

the Reformation, and throw off their dependence upon *the city that reigns over the Kings of the earth: They shall hate the whore, and make her desolate and naked, and eat her flesh, and burn her with fire; for God hath put it into their hearts to fulfil his will* (z).

He has a political as well as a spiritual empire among the children of men. It was he that ordered those transitions of the monarchy from the *Assyrians* to the *Medes* and *Persians*, and then to the *Greeks*, dashing one mighty kingdom against another for the sake of his own people; or, as it is called, *sifting the nations with a sieve of vanity* (a), that he might gather his own wheat into the garner. Thus the angel tells *Daniel, I will return to fight with the Prince of Persia; and when I am gone forth, lo, the Prince of Grecia shall come, and there is none that holds with me in these things, but Michael your Prince* (b). Nor would he be equal to the dangers of his own people, without a greatness of this kind. He must have *power over all flesh*, that he may be able to *give eternal life to as many as God has given him* (c). He has his Majesty on purpose to *save the poor and needy, and redeem their souls from deceit and violence* (d). *At that time*, saith the angel, *shall Michael stand up, the great Prince that stands for the children of thy people, and then shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even unto the same time, and at that time shall thy people be delivered, every one that is found written in the book* (e). I mention these things to shew you, that the power of a Redeemer over a Tyrant is a doctrine of the Gospel; an article of his glory, to whom your souls are committed for everlasting life. You read of *a woman clothed with the sun, and having the moon under her feet, and she brought forth a man-child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron.*

(z) Rev. xvii. 16—18.
(a) Isai. xxx. 28.
(b) Dan. x. 20, 21.
(c) John xvii. 2.
(d) Psal. lxxii. 13, 14.
(e) Dan. xii. 1.

iron (*f*). Indeed we are there told, that *her child was caught up to God and to his throne*, yet he has a right of government over the world: and this he uſes not ſo much in perſon, by any viſible acts of dominion, ſuch as thunder, earthquakes and miracles; but he has committed it to his people, *He that overcomes, and keeps my words unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations, and he ſhall rule them with a rod of iron, as the veſſels of a potter ſhall they be broken to ſhivers, even as I have received of my father* (*g*). Thus you ſee under what view we have our account of political mercies, that uſeful Governors are ſo many bleſſings from him, who is *King of Kings, and Lord of Lords* (*h*). You find how divine a taſte the *Jews* had of ſuch a favour; *by the good hand of our God upon us, they brought us a man of underſtanding* (*i*). And that he gave them an eminent inſtance of his love in ſetting *Nehemiah* over them, is what you will conſider with an advantage under theſe three heads:

1. The wickedneſs of thoſe that had gone before him in the office.
2. The principle of Religion that carried him thro' all his adminiſtration: and,
3. His frequent recourſe to the mercy of God for acceptance. One of theſe characters ſhews that his rule was the Law, and the other, that his confidence was the Goſpel.

1. The rarity of ſuch an inſtance, proves it to be more eminently the work of God. If he would have indulged himſelf in a graſp at all that could have been got by his place, he had examples enough. What he ſays of others betrays the groſs corruption of human nature, that when all the people were in bondage, ſome of them would make it heavier to the reſt, though themſelves were but a more exalted ſort of

 ſlaves.

(*f*) Rev. xii. 1, 5.
(*g*) Rev ii. 26, 27.
(*h*) Rev xvii. 14.
(*i*) Ezra viii. 18.

ſlaves. *The former Governors that were before me, were chargeable to the people, and had taken of them bread and wine*, theſe were perquiſites, *beſides forty ſhekels of ſilver*, as a fine or bribe; *yea, even their ſervants bare rule over the people* (*k*), they uſed them with ſurlineſs and cruelty. There cannot be a viler diſpoſition than this, that a man ſhall deſpiſe and aggravate the miſeries of others, though he has no way of doing it but by forgetting his own. It was with this ſpirit that one of the thieves upon the Croſs reviled our LORD: *If thou be Chriſt, ſave thyſelf and us* (*l*). It is not a petition for mercy, but a ſcorn made up of deſpair and hatred. The other took it in that ſenſe, and ſhews him how unſuitable ſuch a carriage was to their own condition; *Doſt thou not fear God, ſeeing thou art in the ſame condemnation?* This was a thing that grieved *Moſes* to the heart, when he ſaw one *Iſraelite* abuſing another in *Egypt*; and yet *he that did his neighbour wrong*, is ſo much in love with his own little tyranny, that rather than loſe his revenge, he will refuſe his Deliverer, *Who made thee a Judge and a Prince over us* (*m*)?

What an heavy yoke muſt there be upon the *Jews* before *Nehemiah*'s time? They might well ſay, *The yoke of my tranſgreſſions is bound by his hand, they are wreathed and come upon my neck* (*n*). Here is a threefold cord to make them unhappy: *Firſt*, The power of the *Babylonians*; *Secondly*, The pride of their own Governors; and, *Thirdly*, The ſawcineſs of ſervants. *How was the beauty of Iſrael fallen!* It had been their cry againſt the enemy, *Servants rule over us, and there is none to deliver out of their hand*; *Princes are hanged up by the hand, and the faces of the Elders are not honoured* (*o*). But there is ſomething more grating in what the Prophet mentions, *The people ſhall be oppreſſed*

(*k*) Neh. v. 15.
(*l*) Luke xxiii. 39, 40.
(*m*) Exod. ii. 11—14.
(*n*) Lam. i. 14.
(*o*) Lam. v. 8, 12.

oppreſſed every one by another, and every one by his neighbour; the child ſhall behave himſelf proudly againſt the ancient, and the baſe againſt the honourable (*p*). Thus indecent will covetouſneſs be; but *Nehemiah* gives it as one reaſon why *for twelve years he required not the bread of the Governor, becauſe the bondage was heavy upon the people* (*q*). The argument that *Eliſha* uſed with *Gehazi* might have been brought with more weight into the caſe before us; *Is this a time to receive money and garments, and olive-yards, and vineyards, and ſheep and oxen* (*r*)? Such a ſelfiſhneſs looks very ill in a day of general ſorrow. *Nehemiah* had a more noble tenderneſs. We may ſuppoſe him to be of a chearful temper, becauſe he had *never before been ſad in the King's preſence:* he then lived in the fulneſs of a mighty court, and had almoſt as great a diſtinction as honour could give him, being the Cup-bearer, ſo that he wanted nothing for himſelf; and yet he *remembers*, he feels, *Jeruſalem afar off:* Though he might apprehend ſome danger in looking melancholy, which makes him *very ſore afraid* when the King obſerved it, yet he both owns the thing, and tells the cauſe; *Why ſhould not my countenance be ſad, when the city, the place of my father's ſepulchre lies waſte, and the gates thereof are conſumed with fire* (*s*)? This made but little impreſſion upon thoſe that were before him. But,

You ſee the good of a public ſpirit; it is a thing mightily talked of, but the Apoſtle himſelf complains that the examples were very rare: he ſays of *Timothy*, *I have no man like-minded, who will naturally care for your ſtate. For all ſeek their own, not the things which are Jeſus Chriſt's* (*t*). It was an old charge, that *the ſhepherds fed themſelves, and not their flocks* (*u*); and that *the Princes of Iſrael were like wolves ravening the prey,*

(*p*) Iſai. iii. 5.
(*q*) Neh. v. 18.
(*r*) 2 Kings v. 26.
(*s*) Neh. ii. 1, 2, 3.
(*t*) Phil. ii. 20, 21.
(*u*) Ezek. xxxiv. 2.

to ſhed blood, and to deſtroy ſouls, and to get diſhoneſt gain (*x*). Now it is a mercy if this temper is ever divided from the title; and eſpecially ſince it is ſo notorious, that if great men will indulge their wickedneſs, they ſeldom want perſons who will make both Law and Goſpel a proſtitute. *They ſay ſtill unto them that deſpiſe me, Ye ſhall have peace, and they ſay to every one that walks after the imagination of his own heart, No evil ſhall come upon you* (*y*). The hand of God is eminently ſeen in fitting perſons to a public ſervice, when their zeal, their contrivance, their carriage, nay their very pleaſures, are all ſo many lines drawn to this as the centre. There is no great happineſs in having ignorance or luxury made royal, that folly or pride ſhould be ſet in dignity. *Wo unto thee, O land, when thy King is a child, and thy Princes eat in the morning: Bleſſed art thou, O land, when thy King is the ſon of nobles, and thy Princes eat in due ſeaſon for ſtrength, and not for drunkenneſs* (*z*). And whenever the Providence of God has plainly diſtinguiſhed the two characters that are here mentioned, it is ungrateful to his love and provoking to his jealouſy, it argues both a wicked and a mean frame of ſpirit, not to admire what he has done. And I am ſure to ſuch a caſe as that, you may bring over *Solomon*'s obſervation for the confuſion of all murmurers, *Say not thou, what is the cauſe that former days were better than theſe, for thou doſt not wiſely enquire concerning this* (*a*).

2. Another thing that ſhews how great an inſtance of God's favour it was to ſet ſuch a perſon as *Nehemiah* over the *Jews*, is the principle of Religion that carried him through all his adminiſtration. You muſt underſtand it of ſomething higher than human pity, though there was abundance of that in it. And leſt any ſhould think that he managed in a ſneaking way, you find he keeps up the port of a Governor with all

(*x*) Ezek. xx. 27.
(*y*) Jer. xxiii. 17.
(*z*) Eccleſ. x. 16, 17.
(*a*) Eccleſ. vii. 10.

all the frugality of a Patriot, and the temperance of a Saint. *I continued in the work of this wall, neither bought we any land: Moreover there were at my table one hundred and fifty Jews and Rulers, beſides thoſe that came unto us from among the Heathen that are about us: Now that which was prepared for me daily was one ox, and ſix choice ſheep, alſo fowls were prepared for me, and once in ten days ſtore of all ſorts of wine* (*b*); ſo that you ſee he underſtood a magnificence that would ſet him above the contempt of any, and *yet for all this, required he not the bread of the Governor, becauſe the bondage was heavy upon the people.* Now this is more than could be expected from common nature; for, as we are in ourſelves, *we live in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another* (*c*). But this good man does with Juſtice put it upon a greater principle; the reaſon why he would not run into the avarice and haughtineſs of thoſe that went before him, was taken from another world, *So did not I, becauſe of the fear of God.*

You ſee how a vein of piety ſpreads through all this ſtory, when he firſt heard the news, that *the remnant of the captivity were in affliction and reproach, the wall of Jeruſalem broke down, and the gates thereof burnt with fire; he ſat down and wept, and mourned certain days and faſted, and prayed before the God of heaven* (*d*). When he was to appear before the King with an unuſual ſadneſs, which for any thing I know, might be as much againſt law as coming in *ſackcloth* within the palace-gates (*e*). He is at prayer again, *Proſper, I pray thee, thy ſervant this day, and grant him mercy in the ſight of this man.* When the King aſked him, what he would have, he dare not anſwer the queſtion, till he has wafted a deſire; *I prayed unto the*

(*b*) Neh. v. 16—18.
(*c*) Tit. iii. 3.
(*d*) Neh. i. 3, 4.
(*e*) Eſth. iv. 2.

the God of heaven (*g*); and when he got his requeſt, he looks at the divinity that ſhone through it; *The King granted me according to the good hand of my God upon me* (*h*). This is what he runs to in all his dangers; *They made us afraid, ſaying, Their hands ſhall be weakned from the work that it be not done; now therefore, O God, ſtrengthen my hands* (*i*). And what an happy Reformation ſhall a perſon thus qualified carry on for the public ſervice? If it is covetouſneſs that brings him to the government, he will be a perpetual drain to his people: if it is ambition, though that may give him a diſdain that his country ſhall be ſold to foreign tyrants, yet it is always in danger from himſelf. But if it is the fear of God that ſupplies him with rules, and a love to Religion that fills his ſpirit, he will think no toil too much. Other principles will grow tired, but theſe make us never weary of well-doing. You have in the laſt chapter of this Book ſuch a roll of ſervices, as nothing but the mighty grace of God could have carried him through.

He fetches back the *Levites*, who had *left their work, and fled every one to his field, becauſe their portions were not given them. He contended with the Rulers and ſaid, Why is the houſe of God forſaken* (*k*)? He took care to keep *the Sabbath as the holy of the Lord and honourable:* and in reſtoring of God's worſhip, he did what was moſt ſignificant to it, and that was reforming the Miniſters; *I commanded the Levites that they ſhould cleanſe themſelves, and that they ſhould come and keep the gates to ſanctify the Sabbath-day.* Nor can I look upon it to be any thing below Religion that would firſt make him enter into this deſign. As I have before obſerved, he wanted no perſonal honour, being a man of figure at court. There he lived at eaſe, for it is plain that *Babylon* was not then

(*g*) Neh. ii. 4.
(*h*) Neh. ii. 8.
(*i*) Neh. vi. 9.
(*k*) Neh. xiii. 10, 11.

then so vile, as to have a *religious test*, but the *Jews* were admitted to places of trust and profit. Here he might have *died in his nest, and multiplied his days as the sand* (*l*). What was it that could draw him away from a quiet and splendid life, to the danger, fatigue and reproach that he had in his undertaking? You must account for this, as the Scripture does for the behaviour of *Moses*, that *by faith he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; and chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he had respect to the recompence of reward* (*m*). And yet,

3. *Nehemiah* gives a farther evidence of his Religion, and that he understood *the truth as it is in Jesus*, because he recommends himself to the mercy of GOD for acceptance. There are some passages that seem to look another way, as that, *Think upon me, O my God, for good, according to all that I have done for this people* (*n*): and when he had put the public funds into a better way, and *made Treasurers over the treasuries who were counted faithful, and whose office was to distribute among their brethren*; he says, *Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and wipe not out my good deeds that I have done for the house of my God, and for the offices thereof* (*o*). But there is one place that shews how little confidence he had in any righteousness of his own; *Remember me, O my God, concerning this also, and spare me, according to the greatness of thy mercy* (*p*). Mercy supposes both necessity and unworthiness. When we apply to that perfection of the divine nature, it is an argument that we have no merit upon which any thing is owing to us. And what

(*l*) Job xxix. 18.
(*m*) Heb. iv. 24—26.
(*n*) Neh. v. 19.
(*o*) Neh. xiii. 14.
(*p*) Neh. xiii. 22.

what is it that he means by being *ſpared?* delivered from enemies? not *made the reproach of the fooliſh*; that he might live in the quiet poſſeſſion of all his toil? I do not deny that this is included: but he now ſpeaks of a future indulgence; that GOD would *ſpare him in the day when he makes up his jewels* (*q*). That he might *find mercy at the hand of the Lord in that day* (*r*); And how comes the mercy then? In what regard does the juſtice or the goodneſs of GOD conſider us, but only as we are found in CHRIST JESUS?

You muſt not think that the *Jews* did not ſupport themſelves with a view of this; for though in ſeveral of their hiſtories which are taken up with political affairs, there is little or no mention of a MESSIAH, yet the reference they bore to him was underſtood; upon which the Apoſtle ſays, that *all the Prophets from Samuel, and thoſe that follow after, as many as have ſpoken, have likewiſe foretold of theſe days* (*s*). And indeed, among them, there never was any notion of happineſs without a pardon, and no hope of pardon but upon a ſatisfaction, *for without ſhedding of blood, there is no remiſſion*, and no ſatisfaction but in *the blood of ſprinkling, that ſpeaks better things than the blood of Abel* (*t*). What we have done for GOD, does yield a comfort, as it is an evidence of what he has done in us; and ſo flows from that, which is the *firſt-fruits of the ſpirit, the earneſt of our inheritance. Hezekiah*, when he *turned his face to the wall and wept ſore*, had the pleaſure to reflect upon this, that he had *walked before God in truth, and with a perfect heart* (*u*). And it is no more than what the Apoſtle had in *his rejoicing in the teſtimony of his conſcience, that in ſimplicity, and godly ſincerity, not with fleſhly wiſdom, but by the grace of God, he had his converſation in the world*, and

(*q*) Mal. iii. 16.
(*r*) 2 Tim. i. 16.
(*s*) Acts iii. 24.
(*t*) Heb. ix. 22—xii. 24.
(*u*) Iſai. xxxviii. 2, 3.

and especially in public affairs, *more abundantly to you-wards* (*x*).

From these passages you may observe, that no sort of evidence sits easier upon the conscience, or looks brighter to faith, than that which arises from a public spirit. For this reason the Martyrs always have it; not that because their external troubles are greater than others, for I believe the torture of some distempers is more acute than any violence that men can use against us; and upon my own account, I shall have as much work for faith and patience on a sick-bed, as at a stake. But God does not usually give his comforts with that profusion in the one case as he does in the other; and the reason is plain, because in these diseases we suffer in a private capacity, and therefore *we alone must bear it.* But in the other case, we are the servants of Christ, and a sort of partners with him. This made the Apostle *rejoice in his sufferings*, because they were *for the people*; and so he *filled up that which was behind of the afflictions of Christ in his flesh for his body's sake, which is the Church* (*y*). Private sorrows are the fruit of sin, but public trials are the result of grace, they flow from Religion, and therefore have a nearer claim to be maintained by it. The believing *Hebrews* are exhorted to look to this as their main evidence. *Call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions, partly, whilst ye became a gazing-stock by reproaches, and partly whilst ye were companions of them that were so used; for ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves, that ye had in heaven a better and an enduring substance. Cast not away therefore your confidence*, the persecution that arose at that time, *which has great recompence of reward* (*z*).

But

(*x*) 2 Cor. i. 12.
(*y*) Colos. i. 24.
(*z*) Heb. x. 32—35.

But yet, this is not our juſtifying righteouſneſs. The Apoſtle *Paul* had the moſt of a public ſpirit of any man; he ſcarce underſtood any intereſt of his own. *Beſides thoſe things that are without, that which came upon him daily, was the care of all the churches. Who was weak, and he was not weak? Who was offended, and he burnt not? He laboured more abundantly than them all* (*a*). *He had fought a good fight, and finiſhed his courſe, and kept the faith* (*b*); but ſtill he deſires to be *found in* CHRIST, *not having his own righteouſneſs* (*c*). How happy is it for a people, when the perſon ſet over them ſhews with *Nehemiah* ſuch a regard to his duty, to make him diligent; and ſuch a ſenſe of his imperfection, as to keep him humble? By *the fear of the Lord* he magnifies GOD's law, and by pleading for *mercy* he advances his grace. Long trains of bleſſings will follow ſuch an one, for *thoſe that honour God, he will honour* (*d*).

V. You farther obſerve, that the vengeance of heaven will come down upon thoſe who do not fall in with the noble meaſures that are recommended by ſo good a Prince: you ſee by this, that I take *Nehemiah*'s words to be more than a *curſe*, or laying out the ſentence which they deſerve: they are alſo a *prophecy* to tell them what would happen. The ceremony that he uſeth of *ſhaking his lap*, was agreeable to thoſe zealous ways that the *eaſtern* countries had of expreſſing themſelves upon any great occaſion. Our SAVIOUR ordered his Diſciples when *they went into a city that would not receive them, or hear their words, to ſhake off the duſt of their feet, which* (he ſaith) *would be a teſtimony againſt that place* (*e*). We find the Apoſtle *Paul* uſing the ſame method that *Nehemiah* did at *Corinth*, *when*

(*a*) 2 Cor. xi. 28, 29.
(*b*) 2 Tim. iv. 6.
(*c*) Phil. iii. 9.
(*d*) 1 Sam. ii. 30.
(*e*) Matt. x. 14.

when the Jews oppoſed themſelves and blaſphemed, he ſhook his raiment, and ſaid unto them, Your blood be henceforth upon your own heads (*f*), and it was very ſignificant in the garb of thoſe countries, for there they wore long garments; and as ſhaking the corner of theſe would throw off any thing that ſtuck to them, ſo the good man in my text both wiſheth and threatens that GOD would deal thus with every one that performs not the promiſe.

1. He was to loſe his inheritance: and,
2. His acquired eſtate: and,
3. If human juſtice could not reach him in either of theſe, *the Judge of all the earth would do right.*

1. One of the things that he either deſires or pronounceth upon thoſe that were deceitful in their oath, was, that they might be turned out of *the inheritance of their fathers*; *ſo God ſhake him out of his houſe, even ſo be he ſhaken out and emptied.* And the equity of ſuch a blow is very plain, becauſe they had taken houſes and lands, and vineyards in mortgage, and therefore it is a *righteous thing with God*, that they who are for ingroſſing the ſhare of others, ſhould loſe their own. *They ſhall have judgment without mercy, that ſhewed no mercy* (*g*). This, among the *Jews*, was the heavier curſe; becauſe their poſſeſſions could not be forfeited or ſold any longer than to the year of *Jubile:* but ſuch men as theſe were not to have the common clemency of the conſtitution. They did theſe things to the raiſing of a family; but all the ſucceſs of their care and luſt, was only a rot to what they had from their fathers, and a curſe to what they leave for their ſons. *God lays up his iniquity for his children, he rewards him, and he ſhall know it* (*h*). And it is threatened againſt a perſon who had been haughty enough,

(*f*) Acts xviii. 6.
(*g*) James ii. 13.
(*h*) Job xxi. 19.

enough, that his poſterity ſhall be brought into that ſervile and ſneaking way, *his children will ſeek to pleaſe the poor, and his hand ſhall reſtore their goods* (*i*).

2. Beſides, they were to loſe what they had raked together; and as *the curſe cauſeleſs ſhall not come*, ſo what *Nehemiah* obſerves of being ſhook out of their labour, is according to all the rules of Providence that we have in Scripture. *An inheritance may be gotten haſtily at the beginning; but the end thereof ſhall not be bleſſed* (*k*); and agreeable to this, are thoſe two obſervations that come very ſoon after: *The getting of treaſures by a lying tongue, is a vanity toſſed to and fro of them that ſeek death; and the robbery of the wicked ſhall deſtroy them, becauſe they refuſe to do judgment* (*l*). Such an execution as this, was ſometimes within the reach of human juſtice; you have a law to that purpoſe, *They made a proclamation throughout all Judah and Jeruſalem, unto all the children of the captivity, that they ſhould gather together, and whoever did not come within three days, according to the counſel of the Princes and Elders, all his ſubſtance ſhould be forfeited, and he himſelf ſeparated from the congregation of thoſe that had been carried away captive* (*m*). *Job* is poſitive that ſuch a mixture of vainglory and fraud falls within the ſtroke of human equity: *If I had ſaid, that gold is mine hope; and to the fine gold, thou art my confidence; if I rejoiced, becauſe my wealth was great, and my hand had gotten much; if my heart had been ſecretly inticed, this was an iniquity to be puniſhed by the judge, becauſe I had denied the God that is above* (*n*): but if it fails there,

3. He intimates, that *the Judge of all the earth will do right.* God will ſhake them out, if men do not, for *the Lord will not hold him guiltleſs that takes his*

(*i*) Job xx. 10.
(*k*) Prov. xx. 21.
(*l*) Prov. xxi. 6, 7.
(*m*) Ezra x. 7, 8.
(*n*) Job xxxi. 25, 27, 28.

his name in vain. He had made it a law among the *Jews*, that *if any one gave of his ſeed to Molech, he ſhould ſurely be put to death; the people of the land were to ſtone him with ſtones* (*o*). This is the fate that he had devoted them to; but it is not unuſual for communities to be corrupted, and therefore ſuppoſing a relaxation of juſtice, GOD takes the matter into his own hand; *If the people of the land do any way hide their eyes from the man and kill him not; then will I ſet my face againſt that man, and againſt his family, and will cut him off, and all that go a whoring after him among the people* (*p*). Thus *he is known by his judgments that he executes, when the wicked are ſnared in the work of their own hands* (*q*). It is giving his empire over the world ſuch a diffuſion, that every one ſhall own it: *So that a man ſhall ſay, Verily there is a reward for the righteous, and verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth* (*r*). This is what *Moſes* pronounced upon the two tribes and a half, that if they ſhuffled in the public cauſe, perhaps they might think themſelves ſecure from the rage of men; but they might *be ſure their ſin would find them out* (*s*).

VI. The laſt obſervation I ſhall give you from the words, is this, that ſuch a behaviour as *Nehemiah*'s was, leads on ſo many public bleſſings, that it ſupplies the people both with the arguments, and the ſpirit of a thankſgiving-day, *All the congregation ſaid, Amen; and praiſed the Lord.* Miſery had taught them to value thoſe liberties which had been the plunder of their brethren, and were now the care of their Governor; they look upon it as a token for good, and as it was ſaid in another caſe, *From this day God would bleſs them* (*t*). You may here obſerve their joy.

(*o*) Lev. xx. 2.
(*p*) Lev. xx. 4, 5.
(*q*) Pſalm vii. 16.
(*r*) Pſalm lviii. 11.
(*s*) Num. xxii. 23.
(*t*) Hag. ii. 19.

1. That it was univerſal; it went through *all the congregation.* And,
2. It was hearty; they ſaid, *Amen.* And,
3. Religious, *They praiſed the Lord.*

1. It was an univerſal joy: we read, that *all the congregation* came into it. If you comprehend thoſe in this account, who had been guilty of cruſhing their brethren, it ſhews what a turn the grace of GOD had given to them; for we are told in the laſt part of the verſe, that *the people did according to the promiſe.* And if theſe were among the perſons *that praiſed the Lord*, it is apparent, that he had given *them repentance from dead works.* But if you think that it is carrying the matter too far, to have ſo much charity for them, you may ſtill look upon it as a mighty change in the congregation; that a numerous aſſembly, who a little before gave in a heavy cry, are now employing their voices in ſhouts of praiſe; they had another opinion of their ſtate, and what Providence had done for them: they were lately ready to ſay, Wherefore hath GOD wrought ſo much *in vain?* Why are our liberties reſcued from *Babylon*, and thrown away in *Canaan?* We had better return, and be ſlaves to the Heathen, than to our brethren; for in that caſe tho' *we* be vile, yet the *cauſe* remains glorious; but here *we loſe the very things that we had wrought.* The vexation of ſuch an argument was now over: *Righteouſneſs and peace had kiſſed each other* (*u*): juſtice had reached a blow to the offenders, and mercy had ſhone out upon the innocent: they could now ſay, that the LORD was *a rock, and his work was perfect* (*x*), that he would not ſuffer men to ſpoil what he had done.

And thus it will be when people are no longer confounded

(*u*) Pſalm lxxxv. 10. (*x*) Deut. xxii 4.

founded with impudent names: *The vile person shall no more be called liberal, nor the churl be said to be bountiful* (*y*): the stupidity will go off, as the wise man observes, *The hypocrite with his mouth destroys his neighbour, but through knowledge shall the just be delivered:* God will let him see into the disguise, and then, *when it goes well with the righteous, the city rejoiceth; and when the wicked perish, there is shouting* (*z*): a fawning servile carriage to the lusts of men, and an insolence to their liberties, will some time or other grow scandalous: *He that saith to the wicked, Thou art righteous, him shall the people curse, nations shall abhor him; but to them that rebuke him shall be a delight, and a good blessing shall come upon him* (*a*).

2. This expression of joy comes easily from them, and yet very full of solemnity: they said *Amen*, i. e. they both approved the sentence, as it was *just*, and gave in their wishes that it might be sure. Religion, I know, hath taught us to *forgive our enemies*; but this is to be understood with a twofold limitation; *first*, it is supposed that we act in a private capacity: and, *secondly*, that these men have given sufficient tokens of their sorrow; *If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him; and if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day say I repent, thou shalt forgive him* (*b*). Now this is quite out of the case where public injuries are done. No man can stop the courses of justice, without giving up the rights of a community. You will see the reason of this, and take the matter in a proper light, by considering the history of *Achan*. Had he stole from some of his brethren, his punishment would have been no more than *restitution four-fold:* but as he made himself rich by the spoils that ought to have been utterly destroyed,

(*y*) Isa.. xxxii. 5.
(*z*) Prov. xi. 9, 10.
(*a*) Prov. xxiv. 24, 25.
(*b*) Luke xvii. 3, 4.

ſo he was *taking of the accurſed thing*; and in what manner is the proceſs of human Juſtice againſt him? *Joſhua* uſeth him with all the tenderneſs that could ariſe from pity to a ſoul: *My ſon, give, I pray thee, glory unto the Lord God of Iſrael, and make confeſſion to him, and tell me what thou haſt done, hide it not from me* (*c*). But this was not to break the fall of vengeance; as the man had brought miſchief upon the whole army, ſo there is a general approbation of the ſentence given againſt him; for *Joſhua* ſaid unto him, *Why haſt thou troubled us? The Lord ſhall trouble thee this day: and all Iſrael ſtoned him with ſtones* (*d*). With ſuch a temper ſhall *the whole family both in heaven and earth* behold the deſolations of a perſecuting Church; for when *Kings, and Merchants, and Prieſts*, who *traded in the ſouls of men*, ſhall *ſtand afar off for fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, and ſaying, Alas, alas, that great city* (*e*); when they *caſt duſt upon their heads* there are more chearful ſounds that come from another quarter. *Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye Apoſtles and Prophets, for God hath avenged you on her* (*f*): and the reaſon is, becauſe *her Merchants were the great men of the earth, and by her ſorceries were all nations deceived, and in her was found the blood of Prophets and of Saints, and of all that were ſlain upon the earth* (*g*).

3. There is a Religion in their joy, *they praiſed the Lord.* This they did partly in gratitude for what was paſt, and partly from a faith in his juſtice and mercy for the time to come. It was matter of praiſe to him that he had raiſed them a man who did *naturally care for their State*; and had both the ſoftneſs to feel their miſeries, and the reſolution to cure them. They looked upon it as all divine that *Nehemiah* did not run into

(*c*) Joſhua vii. 19.
(*d*) Joſhua vii. 25.
(*e*) Rev. xviii. 16.
(*f*) Rev. xviii. 19, 20.
(*g*) Rev. xviii. 23, 24.

into the voracious ways of former Governors, draining them with heavy taxes, and abusing them with saucy servants: and as he kept out of the guilt of oppression himself; so he had the courage to reform it in others: how much grace must there go to the working up of such a Saint, such a Patriot! What a contempt of this world? What thorough views of another? To the cries of sorrow he hath a pity that setteth him beneath a child; to the terrors of wickedness, he hath a courage above a man: quickly touched by the former, and totally impenetrable to the latter. We may think that the prophecy which came a little before this time had collected its main sense and glory into him. He *that is feeble among them shall be as David*; *and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the Lord before them* (*h*). This is the way for great men to answer their characters, and fill their thrones as God hath promised they shall do: *In that day I will make the Governors of Judah as a hearth of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire in a sheaf*; *i. e.* able to destroy the powers that design to smother them, *they shall devour all the people round about* (*i*).

Any appearance or dawn of this will call us to our hosanna's: we *may bless those that come to save us in the name of the Lord, and sing hosanna in the highest.* This *shaking out of* those men *from their houses and labours*, who have been guilty of making so many exiles, is a thing worthy of our God: as he threatens; *All the sinners of thy people shall die by the sword, which say, The sword shall not overtake nor prevent us* (*k*). I will conclude with an awful sentence very agreeable to that in my text, and founded upon the crimes of ambition and greediness. *Wo unto him that covets an evil covetousness to his house, that he may set his nest on high, that*

(*h*) Zech. xii. 8.
(*i*) Zech. xii. 6.
(*k*) Amos ix. 10.

that he may be delivered from the power of evil: Thou hast consulted shame to thy house, by cutting off many people; and hast sinned against thy soul. Wo unto him that buildeth a town with blood, and stablisheth a city by iniquity: Behold, it is not of the Lord of Hosts that the people shall labour in the very fire, and the people shall weary themselves for very vanity (*l*)? This he hath threatned against the public enemies of Religion and Liberty. *Let all the congregation say Amen, and praise the Lord.*

(*l*) Hab. ii. 9—13.

The End *of the* First Volume.